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## 857TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD AT THE NATIONAL CLUB, 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE,  
LONDON, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MAY 22ND, 1944, AT 5 P.M.

AIR COMMODORE P. J. WISEMAN, C.B.E., IN THE CHAIR, IN THE  
ABSENCE, ON DUTY, OF THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE,  
P.C., C.B.E., CHIEF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A., to deliver his Presidential Address on "Positive Conclusions of Biblical Archæology," offering to Sir Charles on its conclusion the warm thanks of the meeting with a few appropriate words, Mr. Ruoff seconding.

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### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

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#### *POSITIVE CONCLUSIONS OF BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY.*

By SIR CHARLES MARSTON, F.S.A.

THE new Education Bill creates an opportunity to enquire what is going to be taught the rising generation on essential subjects, under its provisions. Is it to be present-day knowledge, or, is it to be last century's? It ought of course to be the former, but it looks as though academic minds are still entangled in the theories of last century.

That was a time when leaders of knowledge thought they knew about all there was to be known. So, without taking proper account of possible ignorance, some proceeded to criticize Religion, and others its principal authority the Bible. But the idea that human knowledge was fairly complete has now been altogether shattered.

Last year I quoted a statement of Sir Arthur Eddington:—

"We have turned a corner in the path of progress and our ignorance stands revealed before us appalling and insistent."  
(*Vide* "The Nature of the Physical World.")

This year Sir James Jeans' new book entitled "Physics and Philosophy" tells the same story in another way. It constantly emphasizes the inadequacy and limitations of Human Know-

ledge. Sir James concludes by repeating Newton's well-known statement :—

“ We are still like children playing with pebbles on the seashore while the great ocean of Truth rolls unexplored beyond our reach.”

Newton made this declaration 250 years ago. Think of it—today we are *still* in that position regarding Human Knowledge ! *Still*, despite the radio, the aeroplane, electricity, and many other marvels, unknown to Newton.

Extravagant claims for human knowledge had grown to such an extent in our civilization, that it could not have been easy for Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans to make these declarations. They are both to be congratulated on the moral courage that prompted them, in the interests of Truth, to say what must have been unpalatable to many. For multitudes in all walks of life believe that man's Reason and Science are supreme, and have superseded Revelation. What are youths and Children in our new Colleges and Schools to be taught about this basic question ?

And again, if Human Knowledge has such limitations, and Sir James Jeans seems to think it unlikely to lead us a great deal further, there is the more reason why the rising generation should study Divine Knowledge as set forth in the Bible. This is so important because the Bible deals with that vital Science of Human Nature—the most neglected, and yet the most essential, of the Sciences. As our civilization is based upon the Bible, it may not be a coincidence that, in an age when the teaching of Holy Scripture began to be neglected, civilization began to fall into its present evil plight.

During the past twenty years the Science of Archæology has gone far to vindicate the authenticity of the Bible, and to throw fresh light upon it. But it is difficult for scholars, educated under last century's influences, to realize that *they were taught in ignorance* of much that has since been discovered. So they treat the fresh outside Evidence as though it had no more value than a new conjecture which does not happen to coincide with their school of thought.

For example—one writer dismisses the Evidence recorded in my books by calling me a “fundamentalist.” Today that implies a person who is old-fashioned and out of date. But its characteristics are reversed as it dawns upon those with discerning

minds that only sound fundamentals can give sound conclusions.

Again, the success of all Sciences have been due to the collection and study of Evidence. Last century's academic authorities, through lack of outside evidence about the Bible, were content to accept conjecture and speculation as substitutes. And so they judged the Bible, and called their work "scientific" criticism, when it was all a travesty of Science. But now real outside evidence about the Bible is forthcoming through the Science of Archæology. And this should be taught in our future schools and colleges instead of conclusions reached through the make-believe methods of last century.

In my last address I quoted some sentences from the works of one of the most celebrated of the higher critical school—the late Dr. Driver. He wrote: "It is a canon of historical criticism that a first class historical authority must be contemporary (or nearly so) with the events which it purports to relate."

From this we are entitled to wonder whether what has been found in Bible Lands since his time, would have completely altered Dr. Driver's outlook on the Old Testament.

For the evidence from Ras Shamra is of first class historical value, contemporary (or nearly so), with Moses. That from Jericho is another, contemporary with Joshua; and that from Sinai and Lachish, contemporary with alphabetical writing in the days of Moses and Jeremiah. Let us remember that the pottery system of dating has established these dates during the past eighteen years; and that the Science of Archæology is far more exact today than it was when Dr. Driver wrote.

One of the new discoveries, based on Archæological Evidence, came through the late Dr. Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford. His researches convinced him that Monotheism was the original Religion of the civilized world. And in the same year Dr. Schmidt, the leading authority for the Science of Anthropology, affirmed that Monotheism was also the original Religion of the uncivilized world. This conclusion is an excellent example of the far-reaching effects of Fundamentals. For, if it is correct, it vitiates the statements and conclusions of some of the most distinguished writers on world History, and other subjects, at the present day.

The evidence on which Dr. Langdon based his fundamental conclusions about Religion, is set out in my book "The Bible Comes Alive." He pointed out that in the valley of the Euphrates we have an immensely ancient record of the progress of Religion.

And that the Sumerians were probably the first people to emerge from barbarism before 4000 B.C. Some of their great prehistoric cities in lower Mesopotamia were Ur of the Chaldees, seat of the Moon God, Erech seat of the cult of Anu, the god of heaven and father of all the gods, Nippur seat of Enlil the Earth God, Kish near Babylon seat of the Earth mother goddess, and Eridu seat of the Water God.

The cult of Erech, Nippur and Eridu or sky, earth and water, formed their Trinity.

Some of these sites have been excavated down through the ruins of states and empires, down through a period of at least 5,000 years, to virgin soil. In doing this with three hundred workmen at Kish over a period of twelve years, Dr. Langdon came to the conclusion that the Sumerian polytheism was preceded by monotheism.

At Kish 63 ft. below the surface of the time of Alexander the Great, just above virgin soil, pictographic tablets began, the oldest writings from the Human hand, the earliest statements about religion. Now while we know from inscriptions about 3000 B.C. at Erech, that the Sumerian pantheon even then contained 750 deities, yet before we reach 4000 B.C. the pantheon at Kish only consisted of the Sky God, the Earth God, and the Sun God. And in most primitive tablets from Erech, it consisted only of Anu, the Sky God, and Innini the Queen Mother. If there really was a larger pantheon at the dawn of History these numerous tablets, which are all temple records, would have mentioned them. Nor in these primitive records is there any trace of magic or demons. Everything points to a primitive personal god with the name Anu, Heaven or Sky.

The whole intricate polytheism of Sumer and Babylonia originated in a monotheistic concept. The Sumerian word for God, "digir," means both "high" and "to be bright." This is precisely parallel to the Indo-Germanic word for the Sky God from the root div, "to be bright—deus."

The nature myth gods of India, Greece and Italy, and all Indo-Germanic religions, start with a Sky God, Zeus-pater-Dyauspitar, Jupiter "God the Father" all derived from the root div, "to shine," whence the word deus—god.

Dr. Langdon adds that there was a rapid decline from the original Monotheism to Polytheism, and a belief in Evil Spirits. Now that the Flood is recognized to have been an historical event, we are entitled to use it in tracing the course of Religion.

Dr. Langdon writes, "The Babylonians and Assyrians believed that all revealed knowledge, the mysteries of the expiation rituals, and all true rules of conduct, had been preserved for them directly from the hands of the sages, who lived before the Flood." And, indeed, Archæology now supplies enough evidence to enable historians to trace the course of Religion when they give up evolutionary speculations about it. Thus, for example: There existed before the time of Abraham a people called the Habiru, with their God Elohim; now, I believe, generally recognized as the Hebrews.

The first four words of the Bible "In the beginning Elohim," link us with them and their Deity. And it would seem as though the purest strain of Monotheism survived after the Flood in this Race. In the old Testament, Abraham became their representative, although Abraham's family was associated with moon god worship at Ur of the Chaldees. And so from time to time were his descendants. And indeed Mount Sinai, from which the Commandments were promulgated, appears to have been a centre for moon god worship from early times.

To recapitulate—Through the inscribed clay tablets that have been found in the Euphrates Valley written before 3000 B.C., Dr. Langdon has found evidence that Monotheism existed before Polytheism, and that the Sumerian word for God was "dikir" meaning to be bright. I have been reading again the late Dr. Breasted's book "The Dawn of Conscience," and the evidence he advances presents a parallel picture of things in Egypt at the same period. The inscriptions quoted by Dr. Breasted come largely from the interior of the five Pyramids of Sakhara, and he dates some of them to 3400 B.C. There the original deity, long before the Osiris myth, was the Sun-God, and the Egyptian Beliefs then presented the same phenomena as the Sumerian—an original Monotheism with a decline to Polytheism. The Akhenaton reversion to Monotheism, soon after Moses, appears to have been a revival of the ancient faith.

The antiquity of Belief in a Future Life has also been rescued by the Sciences of Archæology and Anthropology from the evolutionist octopus of last century. Dr. Langdon found Evidence which enabled him to affirm that, before the days of Abraham, the theological view running through Babylonia was of a Heaven for the Righteous, whom the Gods might choose to receive into Paradise, where is the Bread and Water of Eternal Life.

When we turn to the contemporary great civilization of Egypt, evidence from the sources there, to which reference has already been made, enabled Dr. Breasted to write—

“ While the Pyramid Texts have not been able to shake off the old view of the sojourn at the tomb, they give it little thought, and deal almost entirely with a blessed life in a distant realm. It is of not a little interest that the distant realm is the sky, and that the Pyramid Texts know practically nothing of the gloomy hereafter in the Nether World. The realm of the dead therefore is a celestial one, using the term with none of its frequent theological significance in English. That the conception of a celestial paradise, later universal in the Christian world, had its origin in the same enormously old Egyptian belief can hardly be doubted . . . This idea that life was in the sky is the dominant notion far older than the Osirian faith in the Pyramid Texts.”

I have pointed out in my books how the Moral Law embodied in the Commandments was recognized in Egypt long before Moses. In reading “ The Dawn of Conscience ” repeated reference is made to another Ancient Belief which assimilates with what permeates the Books of Moses, and indeed the whole Bible. I refer to all that was centred round the word “ Maat ” or “ Righteousness,” in Egypt. To begin with “ Maat ” links up with the mysterious Melchizedek, King of Salem, whom Abraham met. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes him as “ King of Righteousness.” And the Psalmist refers to “ The order of Melchizedek.” Now an order of Righteousness is just what existed in Egypt in this remote age.

Then Moses, educated in all the Wisdom of Egypt, would have had “ Maat ” in mind when he told the Israelites—“ It shall be *our righteousness* if we observe to do all this commandment ” (Deut. vi, 25).

David repeatedly dwells upon the subject of Righteousness in the Psalms. So does Solomon in the Proverbs, many of which prove to be obviously of Egyptian origin. So do Isaiah and the Prophets. Dr. Breasted even contends that the beautiful passage in Malachi—“ Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His Wings ” is an echo of the Egyptian worship of the Sun God two thousand five hundred years earlier.

How these most ancient Egyptian Inscriptions point the



finger of scorn against these who teach that Old Testament Books are of late origin because of their ethical subject matter. Or against those who represent that the prophet Amos was the first exponent of Monotheism, and a Righteous God !

Listen to specimens of the Sayings with which the Egyptian people were familiar more than a thousand years before the birth of Moses :—

“ Great is Righteousness ; its dispensation endures, nor has it been overthrown since the time its Maker.”

“ Established is the man whose standard is Righteousness, who walketh according to its way.”

“ Although misfortune may carry away wealth, the power of Righteousness is that it endures.”

“ Speak the Truth, do the Truth, for it is Great, it is Mighty, it is Enduring.”

A distinguished world historian has recently written :—

“ The teachings of Christianity are not entirely new and original but are for the most part rooted in the spiritual life of the Age.”

But, as the sentences I have quoted come from such a remote age, the historian might better have said :—

“ The spiritual life of the ages.”

In these days much emphasis is laid on Christ as a new Teacher for the time in which he lived on earth, so people overlook the Fact that He was and is “ The Power of God ”— a Power that is peculiarly needed in the present world. What are our children to be taught in the new schools on these subjects ?

At a recent Debate at the Church Assembly, one of the Bishops stated that this Generation has largely lost the sense of God consciousness. They have lost it through the impression that the human mind has superseded the human Heart. So we see again the importance of Sir James Jeans' statement with which I opened this Address. It may be suggested that neither Reason nor Science are adequate to replace what has been lost in Religious Instincts during the past half century.

On the other hand, it may be pointed out with all diffidence that the new teachings of Science cry out to be adopted by the hierarchy of the academic profession at the present time. The

evidence of History, and of its handmaid Archæology, is still subordinated to last century's theories based on conjecture and speculation. And efforts are even made to twist the Evidence in favour of the old theories, instead of using it in its natural sense as the basis of fresh conclusions. For example, to revert again to the Evidence from the Euphrates Valley of the vast civilisation that existed there when Abraham was living at Ur of the Chaldees. And for two thousand years before his day when man was already writing on clay tablets. And to the almost equally ancient Religious Beliefs in Egypt. These present cumulative Evidence in favour of the earlier part of the Old Testament. And in the sacred interests of Truth they cannot be disregarded in favour of future theories of the Evolution of Mankind. I have seen, for example, pictures in museums purporting to represent the evolution of man in past ages. They were based on fancy, and they seemed to take no account of this vast civilization of six thousand years ago. Are such pictures to be displayed in our new schools and colleges, in defiance of what the Science of Archæology is telling us?

It is interesting to notice that the depth of the deposits at Kish, below the strata of Alexander the Great, was 63 feet. Those at Lachish, below the strata of Cyrus, are about the same. I remember asking the late Mr. Starkey how long it would take to complete the excavations of Lachish, and he replied "One hundred years." That gives some idea of the vast Archæological work that remains to be done in Bible Lands, and that even now we have only laid bare the fringe of it. But what has been laid bare reveals a background of culture to the Old Testament of a very different character to what was postulated at the end of last century. So far from Archæologists themselves starting with a prejudice in favour of the Old Testament, my experience has been that they rather expected to confirm theories of last century.

When the time comes that the Truth or otherwise of present-day knowledge is made manifest, I often think that the errors which will be revealed will be found to be due to fundamental fallacies, and to ignoring archæological evidence which contradicts them.

Critics claim to be impartial, but in the course of a long life it is difficult to recall anyone who was really unprejudiced in his beliefs, although there are plenty who adopt a style of writing to seem to be so.

In the science of inanimate objects great progress has been made, because as a rule the study of them is without prejudice. But the Science of Man and his Religion is so surrounded with prejudice that it is impossible to escape it. And here I would point out that the infinity of books acts as a sort of jungle to prevent human beings "seeing out of the woods for the trees." There was no printing press in Solomon's time, and yet he complained "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh . . . This is the end of the matter—Fear God and keep His Commandments."

References have been made to summaries of Evidence in this brief address which show that the Science of Archæology has thrown a dazzling light upon the History of Religion during the past twenty years. While it confirms the Bible it suggests that the Divine has been in contact with human beings capable to receive His Revelation, in all ages. And side by side there has been a constant endeavour by the Power described by our Lord as "the Prince of this World" to pervert and thwart the Message. At the present time we regard Hitler as the embodiment of Evil, and we are being led to believe that his overthrow will enable us to inaugurate a new and better material world. But there exists a far wider and older Source of Evil than Hitler and both Prophecy and History warn us against Him. It is not in the direction of material things that we may look for Happiness, but from the Unseen, which the study and teaching of material things did so much to obscure in the past half century. Before the days of Abraham an Egyptian seer wrote:—

"I have made every man like his brother, and I have forbidden that they do evil, but it was their hearts which undid what I have said."

That seems as true at the present time as it was more than four thousand years ago. Let us hope that the Teachers of the new Education may take account of these things.

Offering the warm thanks of the Society to the President for his address, the Chairman, Air Commodore WISEMAN, said: The main theme of this paper is of considerable importance. It should help in no small measure in counteracting the tendency to an unthinking, even parrot-like, repetition of the old phrase about the "assured results of modern criticism" of the Bible. These results, relating

to speculations as to authorship and time of writing, far from being "assured," are becoming increasingly questioned, especially by archæology. Moreover, the type of criticism applied one hundred years ago, before archæology had contributed its wealth of information, can scarcely be called "modern."

Sir Charles Marston has referred in his paper to certain criticisms of views he has published. These appeared in a Thinkers' Library series, whose general outlook is "there is no God." The book in question is by Mr. Howell-Smith and is entitled "In Search of the Real Bible." Let me read his criticisms (page 93): "Sir Charles Marston, author of 'The Bible is True,' and other Fundamentalist works, claims that the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets, which was begun in 1929, has undermined the whole of the Wellhausen views about the origin and growth of the Pentateuch." Further: "Professor J. Garstang's excavations on the site of ancient Jericho have revealed a succession of cities starting from the early Bronze Age (about 2000 B.C.). One of these cities Garstang believes was destroyed by fire, the walls having been breached by an earthquake just before the incendiarism. These facts show that the impossible tale (a fusion of two variants) in the Book of Joshua (vi) rests on a basis of fact. Garstang's dating throws back the Exodus two centuries earlier than the usual reckoning, which, however, is still favoured by important archæologists like Père Vincert, O.S.D."

*It is regretted that the final page of the printer's proof was accidentally omitted from the 1944 Volume. It is now attached so that members can add it to their Volume LXXVI.*

*These concluding paragraphs should appear following the last paragraph now appearing on page 183.*

(detach here)

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Two things need to be dealt with in this criticism. The archaeological value of (a) the Ras Shamra tablets and (b) the Jericho excavations; and it is possible, at the end of this Presidential Address, to touch very briefly on these points.

I agree with Sir Charles that the evidence of the Ras Shamra tablets is important in relation to Wellhausen's theories as to the origin and growth of the Pentateuch. It is difficult to conceive that had Wellhausen written subsequent to their discovery he would have said what he did sixty years ago. But the author of "The Bible is True" has been called a "Fundamentalist" because in his judgment the general evidence of archæology is of more value than speculative criticism as to authorship and dates of Old Testament books. I will therefore cite a scholar who some would call a "Higher Critic." (The mere use of names like "Fundamentalist" or "Higher Critic" does nothing to settle our problems.) Here is what Professor Jack says on page 6 of his Ras Shamra Tablets:— "Among other things, they contradict one of the principal assumptions of the Reuss-Graf-Wellhausen school, namely, that the Israelites could not have had documents at their disposal written before the epoch of the kings, and this has been emphasised lately by M. de Groote, Professor at Groningen, in a volume on 1 Samuel."

In regard to the second matter, the findings at Jericho, I am frankly puzzled by what Mr. Howell-Smith writes. He boldly pronounces it "an impossible tale," yet at once says that archaeological excavation had revealed that it "rests on a basis of fact." This looks much more like a criticism of the critic's assumption that the Bible account is "an impossible tale" than of Sir Charles Marston's views.

I was at Kish when the pictographic tablets referred to—the oldest writing known to us—were discovered, and well remember Professor Langdon's prophecy that the discovery that day would prove to be of immense importance. We thank Sir Charles Marston very warmly for his outspoken paper.