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solitary candle, we should all be able to see everything characteristic in the building. We should see all the other faces, for a human face is quick to catch light; and we should see the shape and the principal architectural features of the place. Of course, we should not see everything *clearly*; but what we did see by the candle, by daylight we should see only more clearly. What we see in ourselves in lucid and candid moments God sees with perfect clearness.

And so I say, and the Psalmist is my guide, that it is an extremely good thing to go away by ourselves after one of these crises. We had all indeed better meet our crisis on our knees; but, after we have met and triumphed over it, we would do well to put the enemy to rout by having a walk and a talk with ourselves alone. This good man (for a man is a good man who has become aware even of the good fight)—this good man said—and here I am not really going from the actual text—‘You are a fine fellow; and that was a nice view of life you were philandering with! You made a great to-do about God not governing this world; when the fact is all that had really happened to you was that you were envious of unscrupulous people who seem to prosper.’ As he laid the lash on himself stroke after stroke, he cried, ‘O Lord, it is all true. O Lord, I was as a beast before Thee.’ Now he meant that; he chose just that word *beast*, and we ought not to quarrel with it on grounds of taste, for he knew his own business. He had indeed envied cattle their stoutness and their placidity; forgetting for the moment that you cannot have it every way; that a cow has no sense of the landscape, no understanding of poetry; that Wordsworth will always be lost on

a cow. ‘So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before Thee.’

He closes with a fine saying: ‘Nevertheless I am continually with Thee.’ Surely the translation should rather be: ‘Nevertheless I am with Thee henceforth and to the end.’ That is to say—Lord, never again shall I be tempted to speak with laughter and cynicism about this great life of ours. Thou mayst catch me yet in many a sorry byway of the spirit; but never henceforth in that particular corner.

There are two ways of living, two ways of viewing life. There is the laughing, cynical, atheistic, unbelieving way; and there is the big way. There are two ways of playing the game. There is the big way and there is the rotten way. You and I are again and again inclined to think in a poor way about life. We have often very good reason. I do not want to speak easily about life; for life is such a baffling thing that God had to send His own Son into the world to encourage us to hold on. Faith is the substantiation of things hoped for; it is a conviction concerning things not seen. Faith is obedience to the highest possible hypothesis about life—that the best is the truth. Of course faith will always be confronted with an apparently contradicting world. I say of course: for otherwise, deprived, that is to say, of difficulties and obstacles and the haunting menace of its own alternative, faith would die out of the soul.

What then? Shall we whine? Shall we curse? Or—shall we pray?

Meanwhile, the silent lip!  
Meanwhile, the climbing feet!

## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Arabia in the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

THE notices of Arabia which occur in the Old Testament have been investigated by numerous savants, among whom the most famous are probably Sprenger and Glaser. Though the work of Dr. Moritz does not mention the Bible in its title, the second half is devoted to a study of Solomon's

<sup>1</sup> Von B. Moritz, *Arabien: Studien zur physikalischen und historischen Geographie des Landes* (Hanover, 1923).

expedition to Ophir, while the first half, though not exclusively Biblical, contains many suggestions for the interpretation or illustration of Biblical texts. The author is one of the few scholars who have travelled in Arabia, and indeed with the camera, which has enabled him to present his readers with a number of successful photographs. But he also brings to bear on his subject profound acquaintance with the literature of the Arabs, which is indeed removed by many centuries from

the latest of the Biblical books, but owing to the general stability of Arabian institutions can here and there be utilized for the understanding of Biblical times.

This stability is only relative, and comparison between the references in the Old Testament, the later poetry, and the present time, exhibits changes even in the natural features of the country. The lion, about whom the classical poetry knows so much, and for whom it has so many names, is not now found in the peninsula. More surprising still is the general disappearance of the *tree*; in Is 21<sup>13</sup> the caravans of Dedan (identified by Janssen and Savignac with al-'Ula) are threatened with nights to be spent in the forest, among the wild beasts; there are now no forests where they could lodge! Accumulations of sand have left old ports far inland. Such is probably the case with Ezion Geber, felicitously interpreted by Dr. Moritz as *The Ghadā bushes of Geber*, the name of their whilom owner.

This was the port whence Solomon and his ally Hiram sent ships to the Eldorado Ophir, whence they brought four hundred and twenty *kikkar* of gold. Since it would appear from the earliest account that the kings sent one ship apiece, the question arises how they procured this quantity of the precious metal. Two ships were scarcely sufficient for a warlike expedition; if, on the other hand, they were engaged in peaceful trade, what goods could they carry for which such a sum could be given in exchange? For the products of Palestine, being all agricultural, would scarcely provide in the cargo of two ships sufficient for such a price. Dr. Moritz's suggestion, that the cargo carried was one of slaves, seems to answer this question very imperfectly. He himself emphasizes the small dimensions of the craft employed; and a cargo of slaves, if carried for any considerable distance, would require extra provision of food and water, such as inanimate goods would not require; and if very high prices were to be demanded for the slaves, their accommodation in the vessels would have to be such as would make

it likely that they would survive the voyage. If, on the other hand, the amount of gold brought back is enormously exaggerated, it is difficult to see why any record of such an expedition should be preserved. Yet neither war nor trade seems to account for the procuring of an enormous quantity with two boats of a few tons' burden. And indeed the narrative says nothing of either; it seems to think of Ophir as a place where gold was to be had in any quantity, like Sindbad's Valley of Precious Stones.

It remains to locate Ophir; and Dr. Moritz thinks the place intended must be somewhere on the Arabian coast; among other reasons he urges the difficulty which these craft would have encountered in negotiating the Bab al-Mandeb. On the other hand, whereas the Biblical narrative allows three years for the voyage, Dr. Moritz would reduce it to six months. Ophir has to be located in his opinion in some gold-bearing region probably belonging to the ancient kingdom of Saba.

It is, of course, the case that Ophir is mentioned in the genealogical table (Gn 10<sup>29</sup>) as a son of Joktan, whose family are located in Arabia. Some names in that list can be identified either certainly or probably with Arabian localities. Ophir, however, cannot be; and the possibility must be considered that Ophir may have been regarded as the brother of Havilah, which seems capable of being identified in Arabia, on the ground of the connexion of both with gold.

If what the expedition did was neither to raid nor to trade, but to collect gold by working, then the length of time taken and the quantity obtained justify each other; and it is possible that the Biblical historian meant by Ophir no more than 'the gold country.' One can even imagine reasons why the whereabouts of such a place should be kept secret.

Dr. Moritz's work will be very generally welcomed for the fresh light which it brings to bear on the historical geography of Arabia and the Biblical allusions to that country.

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