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1928

712TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1928,

AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the Election of the Rev. Gideon L. Powell, B.D., Ph.D., as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the Rev. Charles Boutflower, M.A., the learned author of "In and about the Book of Daniel," to read his paper on "Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah, 701 B.C."

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION OF JUDAH, 701 B.C.

By THE REV. CHARLES BOUTFLOWER, M.A.

IT is now wellnigh eighty years since the account of Sennacherib's Invasion on the Taylor Cylinder began to be read, so that my subject might seem at first sight to be already worked out.* But inasmuch as our Holy Religion depends on a miraculous story, and comes to us through a nation whose history is in some parts a chain of miracles, I deem it a worthy object to endeavour to throw light on a passage in that nation's history which partakes largely of the miraculous: a passage for ever dear to the heart of every loyal patriot, be he Jew or Christian.

Without entering into the difficulties which gather round those opening words, "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah,"

* See NOTE 3, at end of paper.

I wish to remark that, leaving on one side the chronological question, the Biblical and the Assyrian records, with one marked exception, either confirm or supplement one another in such a way that there is no need for us to postulate *two* campaigns of Sennacherib against Judah. Thus, Sennacherib emphasizes his capture of the fenced cities of Judah with which the Scripture account begins. Then, in the mention of a king of Ashkelon bearing the Jewish name Zedekiah whose dominions stretched for some distance along the coast, and of a king of Ekron, with the Jewish name Pedaiiah, who was delivered by his subjects into the hands of Hezekiah, he confirms the Scripture statement as to Hezekiah's victories in Philistia.* Again, Isaiah's oracle, pointing to Egypt as the invader's goal, is confirmed by Sennacherib's statement that he met and defeated an Egyptian army at Eltekeh. This defeat in turn helps us to understand the Rab-shakeh's words when he speaks of Egypt as "this bruised reed."† Sennacherib, it is true, speaks of himself as making an expedition to the "Hittite land": he does not mention Egypt as his goal, for the good reason that he never got there.

The invader traces his line of march through Phœnicia and down the coast to Joppa, and thence inland to meet the Egyptian army hastening to succour Ekron. After the battle of Eltekeh he captures that city, and also Timnath at the foot of the hills of Judah, 10 miles S.E. of Ekron. The Scripture record supplements this itinerary and shows us the Assyrian a stage further, viz., at Lachish, 16 miles E.N.E. from Gaza and on the direct route from that town through Timnath to Jerusalem. At Lachish, as the famous bas-relief shows us, Sennacherib pitched his camp. This spot, so far as we know, was the furthest point south reached by him. From Lachish, as the Bible tells us, he fell back on Libnah;‡ no doubt to be in closer touch with the army which he had despatched to Jerusalem.

During the siege of Jerusalem, Sennacherib tells us that Hezekiah's picked troops deserted him. This appears to be referred to in Isa. xxii, 3, where the prophet, addressing Jerusalem, says, "All thy rulers," or rather "commanders,"§ "fled away together, they were bound without the bow; all that were found of thee were bound together, they fled afar off."|| The words

* 2 Kings xviii, 8.

† 2 Kings xviii, 21.

‡ Joshua's army coming from the north attacked Libnah before Lachish (Joshua x, 31).

§ In Joshua x, 24, the same word is rendered "chiefs."

|| R.V.M.

would then imply that the deserters were captured by the enemy. Further, we have no need to accuse either Sennacherib or the Biblical writers of exaggeration. Thus, Sennacherib says that he took 46 fenced cities of Judah. Now if the word "bulided" be understood in the sense of "fortified," it is possible to pick out from the Historical Books about the same number. Sennacherib also claims to have carried away from Judah over 200,000 persons. Such wholesale deportations were introduced by Tiglath-Pileser. Judah, whose fighting force in the days of David mounted up to 500,000 men,* was doubtless populous in the prosperous years of Hezekiah. Also she included much of Philistia within her borders and may have afforded a home to many refugees from the Northern Kingdom. On the other hand, Scripture declares that 185,000 of the enemy perished in the overthrow before the walls of Jerusalem; a greater number it is said than the whole force which marched out from Nineveh. Possibly so; but let it be remembered that "all the kings of the West Land," who tendered their submission to Sennacherib before he left Phœnicia, would each be required to furnish their quota to his army, and that to these must be added the camp followers and the multitude who would be drawn to the spot by mercenary motives and in the hope of witnessing the expected assault on the town.

The statement in Isa. xxxi, 1, that the Jews were looking to Egypt for chariots and horses, borne out as it is by the Rabshakeh's taunt as to their weakness in that branch of the service, suits admirably with Sennacherib's description of the Egyptian army defeated by him at Eltekeh.†

In Isaiah's oracle, uttered on the eve of the Great Deliverance, we meet with some life-like touches. The Assyrian is represented as saying, "With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains."‡ Read the annals of Sennacherib—*e.g.* the description of his fifth campaign—and say, is not this true to the life? Again, he is represented by the prophet as going to the mountains, not merely to march triumphantly across them, but with this definite object, *viz.*, to cut down cedar beams, doubtless to roof his palaces. In order to find these, Isaiah

* 2 Sam. xxiv, 9.

† Sennacherib describes the forces opposed to him at Eltekeh as "the kings of Egypt, the bowmen, chariots, and horses of the king of Ethiopia, a countless host," and says that he captured alive "the Egyptian charioteers and princes together with the charioteers of the king of Ethiopia."

‡ Isa. xxxvii, 24.

pictures him as resolved to penetrate "the innermost parts of Lebanon," and "to enter into his farthest lodging-place," or, as some render the words, "its last retreat." This again is true to the life. "Ashur and Ishtar," says Sennacherib, "who loved my priesthood and have pronounced my name, shewed me where the great cedar trunks which had grown lofty trees from distant days and become mighty, sprang up, as they lay concealed in the mountains of Sirara."* These and other details one might love to dwell on, but time and space bid me hasten on to my main subject, which is (i) to show that Sennacherib was foiled in his attempt to take Jerusalem, and (ii) that he was foiled by a disaster of a miraculous nature which took place before the walls of Jerusalem.

Sennacherib was foiled in his attempt to take Jerusalem: he as good as admits it. Speaking of Hezekiah he says "Himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem his royal city. I erected siege-works against him: the one coming out of the gate of his city I turned back to his misery." On which Georges Martin comments: "Chose significative, il ne dit pas qu'il ouvrit la cage et saisit l'oiseau; et s'il ne le dit pas, nous pouvons être assurés qu'il ne le fit pas."† This point, then, needs no further proof: if Sennacherib or his generals had got into Jerusalem, we should be sure to have heard of it.

Now to my second point, viz., *that the Assyrian was foiled by a disaster* of a miraculous nature before the walls of Jerusalem. The evidence for this is to be found in Prophecy, Psalmody, and History: History both profane and sacred.

(i) *In Prophecy*.—In the Book of Isaiah, from chap. i onwards, we find many details foretold respecting the coming disaster, which are seen afterwards to have been fulfilled. Jerusalem is to be left alone as a booth in a vineyard,‡ Jehovah, in the prophecy against Ariel, says, "I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a fort," or wall of circumvallation, "and I will raise siege-works against thee."§ She is to be invested, but not assaulted. The foe is not to "shoot an arrow there": the spearman, mounting the scaling-ladder, is not to "come before it with shield": the military engineer is not to

* Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib*, pp. 107, 120. Sirara is the Sirion of Deut. iii, 9, the Sidonian name of Hermon.

† *La campagne de Sennakhérib en Palestine*, by Georges Martin (Montauban, 1892).

‡ Isa. i, 8.

§ Isa. xxix, 3.

“cast a mount” against the wall.* The Assyrian is to be “broken” and “trodden under foot” in Jehovah’s land and upon his mountains.† Jehovah will “come down to fight upon mount Zion”: as birds hovering over their nests He will protect Jerusalem.‡ Jerusalem, engirdled with the impassable waters of the divine protection, will be better off than a sea-fortress provided with war-galleys§—a reference, surely, to the Island—Tyre, which the Assyrian could not take. Deliverance will come suddenly, and in the night: “At eventide behold terror; and before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.”||

(ii) *In Psalmody*.—As, for instance, in Ps. lxxvi, entitled in the LXX “Respecting the Assyrian.” In this psalm Jerusalem is brought forward as the scene of a Divine deliverance, the Almighty Deliverer being compared, as in Isa. xxxi, 4, to a lion. The R.V.M. renders verses 1 and 2 thus:—

“In Judah is God known:
His Name is great in Israel,
In Salem also is His covert,
And His lair in Zion.”

whilst verses 4–6 are thus rendered in the R.V. :—

“Glorious art Thou and excellent, from the mountains of prey.
The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep;
And none of the men of might have found their hands.
At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.”

Then, later on, in verse 11, we have a call to the neighbouring nations to pay tribute to Jehovah, which the chronicler tells us was actually done after the overthrow of Sennacherib.¶

Again, take Ps. xlvi. Jerusalem is described as—

“The City of the Great King.
God hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge.
For, lo, the kings assembled themselves,
They passed by together.
They, even they, ** saw! Forthwith they** were amazed;
They were dismayed, they were stricken with terror!”††

* Isa. xxxvii, 33.

† Isa. xiv, 25.

‡ Isa. xxxi, 4 and 5.

§ Isa. xxxiii, 21.

|| Isa. xvii, 14.

¶ 2 Chron. xxxii, 23.

** The pronoun is emphatic (see Perowne’s *Psalms*), and also with regard to the word rendered “forthwith.”

†† R.V.M.

“ They saw ” : to make the description more startling we are not told what they saw, but the context shows that it was the City of the Great King—a sight which was to prove death to that mighty host. Presently the poet invites us to walk round the Holy City, and see how she has come unscathed out of this terrible ordeal :—

“ Walk about Zion, and go round about her :
 Tell the towers thereof.
 Mark ye well her bulwarks,
 Traverse* her palaces ;
 That ye may tell it to the generation following.
 For this God is our God for ever and ever ;
 He will be our guide for evermore.”

If those prophecies of Isaiah were never fulfilled, how came they to be treasured in the Sacred Writings ? If Jerusalem never experienced some thrilling, astonishing deliverance, how came those glorious Psalms to be written ?

(iii) However, for positive evidence we turn from Prophecy and Poetry to *History*, and not to Sacred History only, but to the pages of Herodotus and Josephus, and especially to Sennacherib's own annals.

Herodotus, who loves to record all that is marvellous and strange, visited Egypt about two and a-half centuries after the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. After mentioning a blind king in whose reign Egypt was invaded by the Ethiopian Sabacos, he continues thus :—

“ The next king, I was told, was a priest of Hēphæstus, called Sethos. This monarch despised and neglected the warrior-class of the Egyptians, as though he did not need their services. Among other indignities which he offered them, he took from them the lands which they had possessed under all the previous kings, consisting of 12 acres of choice land for each warrior. Afterwards, therefore, when Sanacharib, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched his vast army into Egypt, the warriors one and all refused to come to his aid. On this the monarch, greatly distressed, entered into the inner sanctuary, and before the image of the god, bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept he fell asleep, and dreamed that the god came and stood at his side, bidding him

* R.V.M.

be of good cheer, and go forth boldly to meet the Arabian host, which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who should help him. Sethos, then, relying on the dream, collected such of the Egyptians as were willing to follow him, who were none of them warriors, but traders, artisans, and market people, and with these marched to Pelusium, which commands the entrance into Egypt, and there pitched his camp. As the two armies lay here opposite one another, there came in the night a multitude of field-mice, which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy, and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning, they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves. There stands to this day in the temple of Hēphæstus a stone statue of Sethos with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect—‘Look on me and learn to reverence the gods.’ Thus far I have spoken on the authority of the Egyptians and their priests.”*

The chief points in which the above account agrees with the Biblical record are as follows :—

- (i) A great disaster happens to an army of Sennacherib.
- (ii) This disaster happens in a single night.
- (iii) It is emphasized as a Divine interposition, obtained by a king, who in dire distress goes into the temple of his god to obtain help.

And the points of difference are these :—

- (i) The scene of the disaster is laid in Egypt. The king is an Egyptian king: the god an Egyptian god, apparently Phtah, the god of Memphis.
- (ii) The agency employed is not pestilence, but field-mice.
- (iii) The city rescued is not Jerusalem, but Pelusium on the Palestinian frontier of Egypt.

Now, which of these stories is the true one? This is a most important question, deeply affecting the veracity of Holy Scripture. It is a question, too, on which critics have been divided. Who, then, will come to our help?—A most unexpected ally :

* *Herodotus*, ii, 141-2.

Sennacherib himself. In the Egyptian story, the monarch's distress is attributed to his being deserted by his proper army. According to Sennacherib, as already stated, it was Hezekiah who was thus deserted, not the Egyptian king. The record runs thus :—" *The Arabs and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem his royal city, fell away.*" Add to this, that Sennacherib's account speaks only of Hezekiah and Jerusalem, and says nothing whatever about the Egyptian king and Pelusium. The story told to Herodotus is further negated by Sennacherib's statement, that he was met by an Egyptian army of bowmen and chariotry at Eltekeh, evidently a trained force and no mere gathering of peaceful civilians. The differences between Herodotus' story and the Scripture account have, however, led some critics to suppose that the former must relate to a second campaign, undertaken during those eight closing years of Sennacherib of which we know nothing. But this again is most unlikely, since it would be an equally strange thing if in a second campaign there happened at Pelusium a repetition of what had previously happened at Jerusalem in 701 B.C., viz., a king, deserted by his army, going into the temple of his god to entreat divine assistance, and receiving an astonishing deliverance just when matters had reached a climax. It appears, then, that the story told to Herodotus is a fabrication, closely moulded on what happened, not at Pelusium, but at Jerusalem; and that it should be so is no surprise, for Herodotus tells us that he heard it " *on the authority of the Egyptians and their priests.*"

With regard to the field-mice, which in the Egyptian story take the place of the pestilence, it is remarkable that in Homer's *Iliad*, book i, a pestilence is said to have been inflicted on the Greeks by Apollo Smintheus, "Apollo the Mouse-god." Further, on the coins of Alexandria Troas, Apollo was represented with a mouse in his hand, like the statue shown to Herodotus of Sethos the priest of Hēphæstus, on which was inscribed, "Look on me and fear the gods!" That Apollo the Sun-god should send a pestilence seems natural enough, but why is he designated Apollo the Mouse-god? Probably because the mouse was a symbol of pestilence. It is possible that the history in 1 Sam. v and vi, describing the plague inflicted on the Philistines and the images of the golden mice, may have some bearing on this subject.

We turn next to the pages of the Jewish historian Josephus.*

* *Antiquities*, Bk. x, lines 4-5.

Josephus wrote about eight centuries after the invasion of Sennacherib, and his account of that invasion is based in great measure on the Old-Testament story. After mentioning the letter sent by Sennacherib to Hezekiah, the Jewish king's prayer, and the reassuring answer received through the Prophet Isaiah, Josephus continues his account thus :—

“ But after a while, the king of Assyria, when he had failed of his treacherous designs against the Egyptians, returned home without success on the following occasion : He spent a long time on the siege of Pelusium ; and when the banks that he had raised over against the walls were of a great height,* and when he was ready to make an immediate assault upon them, but heard that Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, was coming, and bringing great forces to aid the Egyptians, and was resolved to march through the desert and so to fall directly upon the Assyrians, this king Sennacherib was disturbed at the news, and, as I said before, left Pelusium and returned back without success. Now, concerning this Sennacherib, Herodotus also says, in the second book of his histories, how this king came against the Egyptian king, who was the priest of Vulcan ; and that, as he was besieging Pelusium, he broke up the siege on the following occasion : This Egyptian priest prayed to God, and God heard his prayer, and sent a judgment upon the Arabian king. (But in this Herodotus was mistaken when he called the king, not king of the Assyrians, but of the Arabians.) And he adds that a multitude of mice gnawed to pieces in one night both the bows and the rest of the armour of the Assyrians ; and that it was on that account that the king, when he had no bows left, drew off his army from Pelusium. And Herodotus does indeed give us this history ; nay, and Berosus, who wrote of the affairs of Chaldea, makes mention of this king Sennacherib, and that he ruled over the Assyrians, and that he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt : and says thus : ”

These words, “ and says thus,” not being found in all copies, it is best to suppose that the extract from Berosus has dropped out, and to regard as Josephus' own words the remainder of the

* These “ banks,” or “ siege-works,” must be distinguished from the banks, mounts, or paved ways, referred to in 2 Kings xix, 32, A.V., up which, as shown in the Lachish bas-relief, the battering-rams were brought to play against the wall.

passage, which agrees closely with the Scripture account and runs thus :—

“ Now, when Sennacherib was returning from the Egyptian war to Jerusalem, he found his army under Rabshakeh his general in danger by a plague, for God had sent a pestilential distemper upon his army, and on the very first night of the siege, a hundred fourscore and five thousand, with their captains and generals, were destroyed. So the king was in a great dread, and in a terrible agony at this calamity ; and being in great fear for his whole army, he fled with the rest of his forces to his own kingdom and to his city Nineveh ; and when he had abode there a little while, he was treacherously assaulted and died by the hands of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, and was slain in his own temple which was called Araske. Now these sons of his were driven away by the citizens on account of the murder of their father, and went into Armenia, while Assarachoddas (Esarhaddon) took the kingdom of Sennacherib. And this proved to be the conclusion of the Assyrian expedition against the people of Jerusalem.”

In studying the above extract, the first thing that strikes us is, that when dealing with the miraculous part of the story, Josephus appeals to the testimony of heathen writers before appealing to the records of his own people. The reason is, that he is writing for the Gentile world. Therefore, when dealing with a story bordering on the miraculous, he very naturally seeks to corroborate it in part with outside testimony from Egypt and Babylonia through the histories of Herodotus and Berosus (notice the emphasis which lies in those words, “ *Herodotus does indeed say this* ”). Then, without in any way contravening their statements, he goes on to give the story contained in the Hebrew Sacred Records.

But though Josephus does not contravene, it is observable that in dealing with Herodotus' story he makes certain additions, perhaps unconsciously. For instance, he tells us that Sennacherib spent a long time over the siege of Pelusium, and that he was just about to start active operations when the news of Tirhakah's advance obliged him to desist. Here, indeed, he adopts a detail taken from the Scripture narrative (see 2 Kings xix, 9). But what shall we say as to his statement that Sennacherib raised banks over against Pelusium ? We may say this, that Sennacherib's own account is that he raised the banks, not against

Pelusium, but against Jerusalem. Speaking of Hezekiah, his words are, "*I erected siege-works against him.*" But whence did Josephus get this added detail? He could not have got it from the inscriptions of Sennacherib, which in his days had long lain buried in the ground. Did he unconsciously take it from the prophecy against Ariel already quoted? If so, he has transferred to Pelusium what was predicted concerning Jerusalem, a prediction which, as Sennacherib's words show, was duly fulfilled.

With regard to the Chaldean Berosus, who flourished about the time of Alexander the Great, we learn from Josephus that this historian speaks of Sennacherib's expedition as directed in part against Egypt. This is important, for it can be shown from contemporary Babylonian inscriptions that Berosus is a most trustworthy historian. All the more, therefore, must we regret that the extract from this author, which Josephus was about to quote, has fallen out. Still those brief words, "Nay, and Berosus," assure us that, after quoting Herodotus, Josephus was about to give further evidence from the pages of Berosus of some disaster having befallen the arms of Sennacherib; a disaster which the Chaldeans, as age-long enemies of the Assyrians, would be only too glad to record.

After thus bringing forward the Egyptians and Chaldean stories, Josephus turns to the records of his own people. Guided doubtless by 2 Sam. xxiv, he interprets the destruction inflicted by the angel of the LORD as the pestilence, and regards the fatal night, mentioned in 2 Kings xix, 35, as the first night of the siege, *i.e.*—according to the Jewish mode of reckoning—the night before the day on which active operations were to begin. The terror-stricken flight of Sennacherib—likely enough in itself—he borrows, may be, from Isa. xxxi, 9: "His rock shall pass away by reason of terror"; while the very brevity of the Sacred Record leads him to imagine, as many have since done, that Sennacherib died very shortly after his return to Nineveh. It escaped him that in the short notice, "*dwelt at Nineveh,*" the historian makes use of a verb of continuance.

One other point calls for a short notice. Josephus very naturally demurs to the Egyptian informants of Herodotus calling Sennacherib "king of the Arabians." Some light is thrown on this by the earliest inscription of Sennacherib, in which he tells us that in his Babylonian campaign in 703 B.C., two years before his invasion of Judah, he captured the allied armies of Merodach-baladan under his stepson, and of the Queen of Arabia under her brother;

also, that he carried captive the Arabs, Arameans, and Chaldeans, from certain Babylonian cities: so that this mention of Sennacherib as "king of the Arabians" does not require us to refer the story of the Egyptian priests to a supposed second invasion of Judah subsequent to Sennacherib's invasion of Arabia in 690 B.C.

I have now to bring forward some indirect evidence from the Assyrian side to show that Sennacherib was baffled in his attempt to take Jerusalem, and that his arms suffered some mysterious reverse. My first piece of evidence shall be that famous bas-relief, the Storming of Lachish, which so awoke the admiration of its discoverer, Sir A. H. Layard. "The whole power of the Great King," writes Layard, adopting the expression of the Sacred Chronicler when writing on the same subject,* "the whole power of the Great King seems to have been called forth to take this stronghold. In no other sculpture were so many armed warriors seen drawn up in array before a besieged city." What was the motive which led to the execution of this famous monument? May it not have been this: a wish on the part of Sennacherib to represent the campaign in Judah as a success, or, at any rate, to hide its failure? Now, the cautious monarch knows quite well that in some cases this can better be done by pictures than by words. There is no need for a detailed account of the siege of Lachish in the royal annals, seeing that it is only the few who can read the difficult cuneiform characters. A picture with short explanatory inscriptions will serve the purpose better. We have, then, only to imagine a party of provincial governors and foreign notables, or possibly simple townsmen, being conducted over the palace and standing before that bas-relief rapt in admiration. What a grand battle-piece! A strong city on its lofty *tell* is seen to be assaulted by the Great King with all his power. So severe is the contest, so great the forces engaged, so animated the whole scene, that, as we look at it, the din and uproar of battle seems, as it were, to rise up from the silent stone. Before such an assault even the strongest city must fall; and that such is to be the fate of this fortress is told by an inset in the centre of the picture, showing a train of captives and spoil issuing from the portal of an embattled

* 2 Chron. xxxii, 9, "now he was before Lachish, and all his power with him." "Power," Heb. *memshalah* = "display of might" (Francis Brown, Heb. Lex.). Could any word better describe the scene on the Lachish bas-relief?

tower. But, pray, what city is this? and who is its proud conqueror? The guide bids his party turn to the right, where the subject is continued on the end wall of the chamber, and, pointing with his stick, proceeds to read the epigraphs, thus:—

“Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria,
sat on a chair of state, and
the spoil of Lachish
passed before him.”

“Tent of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.”

“Camp of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.”

Thus the impression produced on the crowd is, that the campaign in Judah was a brilliant success; and in this way the capture of Lachish is made to blot out the disaster before Jerusalem.

Indirect evidence of another kind, tending to show that Sennacherib entertained a bitter grudge against Hezekiah, may be obtained from the standard inscription on the Taylor Cylinder. In this inscription reference is made to no fewer than 25 royal personages, the greater number being mentioned by name.* Of these 25 persons, 23 receive the title of *sharru*, “king.” The title is distributed alike to friend and foe, for out of the 23, 12 are the enemies of Assyria; some of them, like Merodach-baladan and Shuzub the Chaldean—for whom Sennacherib can find no language contemptuous enough†—very bitter enemies. To two persons only the royal title is denied. First, to Hezekiah of Judah, an hereditary prince, sufficiently powerful to head a hostile confederacy, and the ruler of a “wide territory,”‡ possessing no fewer than 46 strongholds, which it taxed all the skill of the Assyrian to capture;§ a territory so populous that over 200,000 captives were led away from it.|| The space occupied in describing the campaign against this powerful prince is well over the average, and he is thrice mentioned, *i.e.* as often as any other royal personage; yet in every case the royal title is denied to him: twice he is “Hezekiah of Judah,” once simply “Hezekiah,” whilst in a fourth instance, where we might expect the name, a personal pronoun is deemed sufficient. This omission of the royal title is rendered more significant by the fact that

* See NOTE 1, at end of paper.

† Taylor Cylinder, v, 8–18.

‡ Nebi Yunus Inscription, line 15.

§ *Ibid.*, iii, 13–17.

|| *Ibid.*, iii, 17.

Jerusalem is twice called *makhaz sharrutishu*, "his royal city."* It is as if the title *sharru* had been struck out by Sennacherib from the rough copy submitted to him. This belief is much strengthened when we come to consider the case of the only other person to whom it is denied, viz., "Shuzub of Babylon." This Shuzub, who appears not to have been of royal birth,† was set on the throne of Babylon by the king of Elam in the place of Sennacherib's eldest son, Ashur-nadin-shum, who was carried away to Elam. It is clear, then, that Sennacherib's feelings must have been very strong against this commoner, who had supplanted his own son on the throne of the ancient sacred city. So, then, we are not surprised to learn that after a short reign of eighteen months, Shuzub of Babylon was captured alive, thrown into chains, and carried away to Assyria. "At the central gate of Nineveh," writes Sennacherib, "I tied him up like a pig."‡ The bitter animus, which thus vented itself, had a plain reason at the back of it in the case of Shuzub. What was the reason in the case of Hezekiah? Let us make the dead Sennacherib confess, for, in his inscriptions, "he being dead yet speaketh." In strong contrast to the way in which Hezekiah is spoken of in the Standard Inscription, observe that brief notice on some of the Bull Inscriptions: "I devastated the wide district of Judah. *The strong proud Hezekiah its king* I brought in submission to my feet." How surely does Sennacherib here "let the cat out of the bag." Hezekiah has proved too strong for him: too strong for one whose "warfare *strong* kings feared."§ He shut up the bird, but could not take it out of the cage. But is that a sufficient explanation of his being put on the same plane as Shuzub the supplanter? No! there is something more behind: *Sennacherib has lost half his army before Jerusalem!*

I turn lastly to the one important point in which the Biblical and the Assyrian records are at variance, viz., over the despatch of the tribute. Sennacherib concludes his account of the campaign with a full statement of the tribute sent by Hezekiah, and after enumerating the various articles, including 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, and the king's own daughters, winds up thus: "to Nineveh, the city of my lordship, he caused to be brought after me; and he sent his ambassador to pay tribute

* Taylor Cylinder, iii, 21, 32.

† No dynasty is affixed to his name on the Second Dynastic Tablet.

‡ Nebi Yunus Inscription, lines 35-36.

§ Taylor Cylinder, i, 16. The adjective used is the same in both cases.

and to do homage.”* The Bible also speaks of 30 talents of gold—which assures us that both accounts refer to the same tribute ; but only mentions 300 talents of silver. This need not detain us. It may be due, as Brandis affirms, to the use of a lighter talent in the Assyrian’s reckoning. But what constitutes a real difference between the two records is this : Sennacherib affirms that after he had left Judah Hezekiah sent the tribute after him to Nineveh : the Bible declares that the tribute was sent to him at Lachish. How are we to deal with this discrepancy ? On the face of it the Assyrian’s story is a most unlikely one. For some reason or other he has been compelled to withdraw from Judah, leaving Jerusalem untaken. Further, as his records show, he has his hands full with troubles in Babylonia at the other end of his empire. Is it likely, under these circumstances, that Hezekiah, having successfully held out, will send tribute after him to Nineveh ? On the other hand the Scripture story is most comprehensible. Hezekiah, in order to save his city, knocks under, and offers to pay whatever tribute may be demanded. The amount is named and the tribute sent to Lachish. What followed may be best constructed thus :—Sennacherib, on second thoughts, feels that it is not safe for him to go forward to Egypt leaving a strong fortress like Jerusalem untaken in his rear. He therefore coolly seizes his advantage, takes the tribute, and at the same time demands the surrender of Jerusalem. This view is based on Isa. xxxiii, 7, where “ the ambassadors of peace ” are represented as returning to Jerusalem, crying aloud outside the gate, and weeping bitterly. Then, almost immediately after, come the words, “ He hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth not man.” It is further endorsed by Josephus, who says, “ The Assyrian king took it,” viz., the tribute, “ and yet had no regard to what he had promised ; but while he himself went to the war against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left his general, and two of his principal commanders, with great forces, to destroy Jerusalem.”† Such, then appears to be the true account of what happened. And yet I imagine that if we were to ask the man in the street at Nineveh, “ Did the Jewish ambassadors come with their tribute after the king’s return ? ” he would answer at once, “ Certainly : I saw them myself kneel before him and kiss his feet.” In order to hide from his subjects the terrible disaster

* Taylor Cylinder, iii, 39–41.

† *Antiquities*, Bk. x, line 1.

which has befallen his arms, the cautious monarch cunningly arranges that, after his return, Jewish captives, make-believe ambassadors, shall reach the city, bringing with them the costly tribute received at Lachish, including the king's daughters: a telling proof that at last "the strong proud Hezekiah" has been compelled to submit to his sway. Something of the same cunning appears in the very wording of the inscription. The fact is, that the words rendered "he caused to bring after me" may also be rendered "I caused to bring after me," since in the causative conjugation the 1st and 3rd persons singular have the same form. It is only the context which tells us that in the present instance the former is the true reading. But the *true* reading is not the *truthful* reading. The truthful reading is "I caused to bring after me." So then, even in these closing words of the Assyrian's record, I seem to see a further evidence that he has suffered some reverse, which policy, no less than pride, bids him do his utmost to hide from the view of his subjects.

An expert in Assyriology, to whom we are much indebted for proof positive of the kingship of Belshazzar, has lately put forward the view that Sennacherib's campaign was "absolutely successful." This result, however, he obtains only by leaving out of account the testimony of Scripture and Herodotus, on the ground that it is impossible to reconcile those versions of the story with the Assyrian record. His own explanation is, that possibly "Esarhaddon's unsuccessful campaign of 675 was confused in 2 Kings xix, with Sennacherib's successful campaign in 700 (701 (?))."* He thinks that this may also explain Herodotus' story.† To say the least, this is dealing very freely indeed with ancient authors and compilers. It is as if we could only trust the royal historians of Assyria. The best answer to such a construction of history is to point out as I have already done, the different details in which the story told by Herodotus corresponds not only with Scripture, but with the Assyrian's own record, at the same time endeavouring to explain the differences.

The objection that Tirhakah was not king of Ethiopia till some twelve years after the invasion is met by regarding the title as given by anticipation, or, with Professor Flinders Petrie, by looking upon Tirhakah as co-regent with his cousin Shabatoka.

After thus endeavouring to weigh as carefully as I can the evidence which comes to us from Assyrian, Chaldean, Egyptian,

* *Cambridge Ancient History*, iii, p. 278. † See NOTE 2, at end of paper.

and Hebrew sources, I submit that we may reasonably affirm the balance to be decidedly in favour of the Scripture story, and may still in all good conscience "tell it to the generation following" and picture to ourselves and to our children's children, how

"The might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

NOTE 1.

A list of the 23 persons styled "king" on the Cylinder (those marked thus "†" were the enemies of Assyria):—

- | | |
|--|---|
| †1. Marduk-apal-iddina (Merodachbaladan) of Kar-Dunyash,
i, 19, 20. | |
| †2. Ispabara of Ellip, ii, 8, 9. | |
| †3. Lulē (Elulaeus) of Zidon, ii, 35. | |
| 4. Minkhimmu (Menahem) of Samsimuruna, | } "kings of the
Amorite-land,
all of them,"
ii, 47-55. |
| 5. Tubahlu (Ethbaal) of Zidon, | |
| 6. Abdilhti of Arvad, | |
| 7. Urumilki of Gebal (Byblos), | |
| 8. Mitinti of Ashdod, | |
| 9. Buduilu of Beth-Ammon, | |
| 10. Kammusu-nadab of Moab, | |
| 11. Malik-rammu of Edom. | |
| †12. Tsidka (Zedekiah) of Ashkelon, ii, 58. | |
| 13. Sharru-lu-dari of Ashkelon, ii, 62. | |
| 14. Padi of Ekron, ii, 70; iii, 7, 8, 25. | |
| †15. The King of Egypt, ii, 80. | |
| †16. The King of Melukhkhi, ii, 81. | |
| 17. Tsil-Bel of Gaza, iii, 25, 26. | |
| †18. The King of Elam (Shutruk-Nakhkhunte II), iii, 62. | |
| †19. Maniae of Ukku, iv, 2, 3. | |
| †20. The King of Elam (Khallutush-In-Shushinak II), iv, 30, 40. | |
| †21. The King of Elam (Kutir-Nakhkhunte II), iv, 80-v, 1. | |
| †22. The King of Elam (Humbanimena), v, 21, 70; vi, 14, 15. | |
| †23. Shuzub the Chaldean (Mushezib-Marduk) of Babylon,
v, 41; vi, 15. | |

NOTE 2.

In his *Babylonian Historical Texts*, pp. 7 and 8, the author, referring to the story told Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, writes thus: "One night, Herodotus says, field-mice ate the bows, quivers, and shield-handles of the Assyrians. Now it has been frequently pointed out that the mouse typifies pestilence, but no pestilence rots string, wood, and leather." My answer is that the whole description is symbolical, the meaning being that the weapons of the Assyrians were rendered useless, inasmuch as the men who wielded them lay prostrate in death. To say that the mice killed the men would be to mix figure and fact: to say that they rendered the weapons useless, keeps up the figure and expresses symbolically the fact. In further support of his theory—commenting on 2 Kings xix, 7, "Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land"—the author goes so far as to suggest that the first part of the verse may refer to the storm which drove back Esarhaddon, while the latter part he admits can only refer to Sennacherib. He then adds, "the words *ruakh* and *shemu'ah*, 'a wind' and 'a noise,' may be so obviously interpreted of a storm." This argument is completely refuted by Ezek. xi, 19, "I will put a new spirit within you," where the verb and noun are the same as in 2 Kings xix, 7, and the same preposition is used only in a compound form—"within" for "in." Be it also noticed that the word *shemu'ah* is never used in the Old Testament in the sense of "noise." It signifies "report," "rumour," "tidings," something first spoken and then heard.

Whilst condemning the above piece of criticism, I gladly endorse the writer's remark almost immediately after: "It is extremely improbable on historical grounds that Sennacherib invaded Egypt or marched to invest Pelusium. Had a disaster befallen him there, which no attempt was made to retrieve, Palestine would almost certainly have risen against the Assyrians, but we know that no such rising took place."

NOTE 3.

*Sennacherib's Account of His Expedition to Palestine.**

"In my third campaign I went to the Hittite-land. Lulē, king of Zidon, the fear of the splendour of my lordship overwhelmed him, and he fled afar into the sea (Bull inscription 'to Yatnan,'† *i.e.* Cyprus), and I subdued his land. Great Zidon,‡ Little Zidon, Bit-zitte, Zarephath (*Tsariptu*), Makhalliba, Hosah (*Ushu*),§ Achzib,§ Accho,|| his strong cities, fortresses, spots for pasturage and watering, his garrison towns, the terror of the weapons of Ashur my lord overwhelmed them and they submitted to my feet. Ethbaal (*Tuba'lu*) I set on the throne of sovereignty over them, and I laid upon him the tribute of my overlordship yearly without fail. As regards Menahem (*Min-khimmu*) of Samsimuruna, Ethbaal of Zidon, Abdihti of Arvad, Urumilki of Gebal, Mitinti of Ashdod, Budu-ilu of Beth-Ammon, Chemosh-nadab (*Kammusu-nadbi*) of Moab, Malik-rammu of Edom—all of them kings of the Amorite-land, extensive regions—they brought their costly presents along with stores to my presence and kissed my feet.

"But Zedekiah (*Tsidqā*), king of Ashkelon, who did not submit to my yoke, the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, the seed of his father's house, I tore away, and I dragged him off to Assyria. Sharru-ludari, son of Rukibtu, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon, and I imposed on him the payment of tribute, the price of my overlordship, and he drew my yoke. In the course of my campaign Beth-Dagon, Joppa (*Yappū*), Beneberak,¶ Azuru, the cities of Zedekiah, which did not quickly submit to my feet, I besieged, captured, and carried off their spoil.

"The rulers, nobles, and people of Ekron (*Amqarruna*), who had thrown into iron fetters and handed over Padī, their king, a sworn vassal of Assyria, to Hezekiah (*Khazaqiau*) of the land of Judah (*Yaudāa*)—he shut him up in durance as an enemy—their heart feared. They called upon the kings of Egypt (*Mutsuru*), the bowmen, chariots, and horses of the king of Ethiopia (*Melukkkha*), a force without number, and they came to their aid. In the vicinity of Eltekeh** (*Altaqū*) they set the

* Taylor Cylinder, ii, 34; iii, 41.

† In some cases I have given the Assyrian form of the name in italics.

‡ Joshua xi, 8.

§ Joshua xix, 29.

|| Judges i, 31.

¶ Joshua xix, 45.

** Joshua xix, 44.

battle in array against me; they appealed to their weapons. In dependence on Ashur, my lord, I fought with them, and accomplished their overthrow. The commander of the chariots, and the sons of the king of Egypt, together with the commander of the chariots of the king of Ethiopia, my hands captured alive in the midst of the battle. Eltekeh and Timnath* I besieged, captured, and carried off their spoil. Against Ekron I advanced. The rulers and nobles who had made rebellion, I slew, and impaled their bodies on stakes round the town. The townsfolk, who were guilty of disaffection and rebellion, I took for a spoil. The rest of them, who had committed no sin and misdeed, who were faultless, I ordered to be released. Padi, their king, I brought forth from Jerusalem (*Ursalimmu*), and set him on the throne of sovereignty over them. The gift due to my overlordship I laid upon him.

“But Hezekiah of Judah, who did not submit to my yoke, forty-six of his strong-walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighbourhood, which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams and advancing the siege-engines, by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels and breaches, I besieged and captured. I brought away from them and counted as spoil 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number. Himself, like a bird in a cage, I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I erected siege-works against him: the one coming out of the gate of his city I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had spoiled, I separated from his territory and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, to Padi, king of Ekron, and to Tsil-Bel, king of Gaza; and I diminished his territory. To the former tribute, paid yearly, I added a tribute as the price of my overlordship, and I laid it upon them. As for Hezekiah himself, the fear of the splendour of my lordship overwhelmed him. The Arabs and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, fell away (lit. ‘took leave’). Along with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver he caused to be brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city, precious stones, antimony, jewels (?), great carbuncles (?), couches of ivory, state chairs of ivory, elephant’s hide, elephant’s teeth, ebony (?), box-wood (?), valuable treasures of all kinds, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, and he despatched his envoy to pay tribute and do homage.”

* Judges xiv, 1.

DISCUSSION.

In opening the discussion, Dr. THIRTLE, who occupied the Chair, said : It gives me pleasure to move a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and thus to acknowledge the utility and cogency of the essay to which we have listened. Mr. Boutflower's reputation as a writer on Old Testament problems of profound importance—in particular, on the book of Daniel—led us to entertain high expectations ; and we have not been disappointed. If questions still remain open, in regard to the movements of the Assyrian invader, and the fate of his mighty army, then they are subjects for further investigation, even although, owing to the difficulties that may be encountered, we may at the long last realize a measure of disappointment. One thing stands out with clearness—the enemy of God and the Chosen People, the tyrant who for that age represented “ the might of the Gentile,” met his fate : “ unsmote by the sword . . . (he) melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.” The end of the great army came by a miracle, performed for the salvation of Israel and the vindication of the honour of Jehovah. “ Stricken with terror,” as foretold by the Prophet, the generals and captains of Sennacherib were put to confusion, and the men of war whom they led, many thousands in number, were “ cast into a dead sleep.” Only thus, that is, in such a result, could Israel be saved, and Jehovah's name be sanctified among the nations.

We have seen that, as transmitted from one generation to another, the story, so simple in the Old Testament record, came by expansion to embody curious details. According to Israelitish history, as authentically handed down in Holy Scripture, the “ angel of the Lord smote ” the camp of Sennacherib. As explained by subsequent writers, Josephus among them, this visitation was effected by a pestilence, or plague, and in connection with the tragedy a multitude of field-mice are represented as having played a destructive part. We recall that, at an earlier time, when the Ark of the Covenant was rescued from the Philistines, there were placed in the casket, as memorials of a plague, votive images of golden mice and of the tumours (or boils) which had spread death in the land of Philistia. The field-mice have been regarded as symbols of the disease, and this assuredly comes from the conviction that they had some association with the pestilence in its destructive work.

The question arises, can we correlate the various accounts of the destruction of the great army? In some particulars this may be possible. That the angelic visitation should be described as a *pestilence* yields no difficulty. (See 1 Sam. xxiv, 16 and 17; cp. *vv.* 13, 15, 21 and 25.) Again, though not named in Scripture as having a place in the occurrence before us, field-mice were recognized as having a well-defined relation to pestilence. The images placed in the Ark when rescued from Philistia furnish an illustration of this. (1 Sam. vi, 4 and 5; cp. v, 10-12.) To regard the field-mice as a traditional explanation of the pestilential occurrence—carrying infection and spreading disease—is more easy than to conclude that they are introduced into the story by a merely wanton play of the imagination. The Prophet spoke of “the angel”; the army saw the field-mice. Thus the animals were given a place in the story; in the experience of men, field-mice and pestilence go together, as, in later days, rats and bubonic plague have been associated. Denounced by the Prophet of the Lord, the judgment came upon the Assyrian army in a way that could easily be understood; but the incident, as witnessed among men, and introduced into human records, left Providence out of account. In the words of Scripture, “the angel of the Lord smote”; in the common report of men, there came a plague, and this was brought by field-mice as carriers of infection.

Similar visitations have been recorded at other times and in other lands, observers in China declaring that, simultaneously with pestilence among men, there has been great mortality among rats. In the later editions of Sir George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, particulars are given of the destructive nature of epidemics in the Maritime Plain of South-West Palestine, the self-same region traversed by Sennacherib on his march toward Jerusalem, a region, moreover, which has bred disease for generations.

How miracle came in with the destruction of the Assyrian army may very easily be seen. In the judicial providence of God, a pestilence was timed for the hour of Israel's danger; and the consequence was, as we have heard this afternoon:—(1) Sennacherib was foiled in his attempt to take Jerusalem, and (2) he was so foiled by a disaster of a miraculous nature which took place outside the walls of Jerusalem. Here we have the facts, few and simple; but

we need not overlook a tradition, apparently vital and certainly reasonable, that, in the dead of night, the sleeping army was infected by field-mice (or rats), and so its thousands fell victims to pestilence—"were cast into a dead sleep." Other armies have encountered destruction in a similar way. It is important to note that, as the record plainly shows, the host of Sennacherib met disaster in answer to the prayer of God's people, for the deliverance of their city and land. May we not, in these circumstances, emphasize the words of our lecturer in regard to the Prophecies and Psalms to which he has referred: "If those prophecies of Isaiah were never fulfilled, how came they to be treasured in the Sacred Writings? If Jerusalem never experienced some thrilling, astonishing deliverance, how came those glorious Psalms to be written?"

Mr. R. DUNCAN said: It seems a strange providence that the reign of the good king Hezekiah should be marked by so severe a visitation as the overrunning of Judah by the Assyrian armies; the reduction of its fenced cities, Jerusalem excepted, and the carrying into captivity of multitudes of the people. Perhaps the explanation is that Hezekiah, having, through Divine favour, enjoyed long years of prosperity, grew exalted in spirit, and, without seeking counsel of the Lord, rebelled against the Assyrian suzerainty inherited from the evil days of his father Ahaz. Going forward thus in his own strength, Hezekiah had to learn by dire experience that in the Lord alone could Judah find deliverance.

As regards the destruction of the Assyrian host, the inference that this was caused by pestilence seems to me unsupported. The idea has been borrowed from Josephus, not from the Scriptures. What they indicate is that the host perished in its sleep. From neither cholera nor bubonic plague—Eastern forms of pestilence with which we are acquainted—would so quiet a type of death ensue. But slumbering men, breathing such a gas as, say, carbon monoxide, would sink peacefully into death. I suggest that this was what happened. Surely the Almighty knew as much then about gases and their lethal effects as our scientists did in the late War. And would it not be just as easy for Him to pervade the surrounding air with carbon monoxide as with microbes, as easy as to gather among the sleepers myriads of field-mice?

My suggestion may seem far-fetched, but how striking the poet's intuition:—

“ For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast
 And *breathed* on the face of the foe as he passed ;
 And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
 And their hearts but once heaved and for ever grew still.”

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT said : I only wish to make one remark, and that is in regard to the tribute paid by Hezekiah, referred to on p. 208. It is one of those points which for some time the critics held up as a sure proof of a mistake in the Bible. For, when the Assyrian records of this incident were discovered, it was found that they mentioned “ 800 ” talents of silver and “ 30 ” talents of gold, while the Scriptures spoke of only “ 300 ” talents of silver and “ 30 ” talents of gold.

When it was found that the two accounts differed it was at once concluded that the Bible must be wrong—of course ! But a little patience only was needed. For it is now well known, that while the standard for calculating the talent of *gold* was the *same in Judæa as in Assyria*—hence both records speak of 30 *talents of gold*—the standard for calculating the talent of silver was *quite different in the two countries*. Indeed, it took *exactly* 800 *Assyrian talents of silver to equal* 300 *Hebrew talents*. So here, once more, the minute accuracy of the sacred record was confirmed.

The Rev. A. H. FINN said : I would comment on two small points :—(1) On p. 198 the paper seems to treat Pss. lxxvi and xlvi as songs of triumph composed *after* the destruction of Sennacherib's army. The Hebrew title of Ps. lxxvi, “ To Asaph,” would indicate a much earlier date.* Personally, it seems to me that the wording of both Psalms is too general to have been framed after the event. Surely one composing an ode of triumph would have given more definite details. At any rate, the sentence on p. 199, “ the poet invites us to walk round the Holy City, and see how she has come unscathed out of this terrible ordeal,” reads more into the Psalm than is actually implied. The language used would be applicable

* The LXX addition, *Pros ton Assyrian*, need not mean more than that the translators deemed the Psalm applicable to the rout of Sennacherib's army.

enough in David's time when Jerusalem became "a city that is at unity in itself" by the uniting of the royal city on Zion with the sacred site on Moriah. (2) On p. 201, the mouse is called "a symbol of pestilence." Of late years we have learnt to regard the rat as a conveyor of bubonic plague. Is it possible that the plague of the Philistines and the pestilence in Sennacherib's army—perhaps even the three days' pestilence in David's time—were outbreaks of the bubonic plague so sadly familiar to us of late? The word rendered "emerods" (1 Sam. v, 9) means "swellings" (? bubo).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

Mr. W. R. ROWLATT JONES wrote: The learned author of that fascinating work *In and About the Book of Daniel* gives the date of this event as 701 B.C. But the difficulties to which he alludes, as "gathering around those opening words, 'Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah,'" will vanish if we recognize that the correct date of Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine and Philistia is 711 B.C., as given by Professor Schrader and George Smith. Then these "irreconcilable discrepancies" of the critics can be met and Biblical chronology vindicated.

Mr. Martin Anstey, in his *Romance of Bible Chronology*, accepts this date as correct, and gives the year 705 B.C. as the time of king Sargon II's death and the reign of Sennacherib as sole monarch in Assyria. There had been a joint-occupation of the throne during the previous six years. In the *Inscriptions*, both king Sargon II and his son claim to have conquered Babylon in the year 710 B.C., and both claim, in the cuneiform, to have conquered Ashdod in the previous year, 711 B.C., that campaign being the one ending in the *débâcle* at Jerusalem. In Isa. xx we read: "In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod." "Tartan" and "Rabshakeh" are military titles, and I think we shall be historically accurate if we claim that the Tartan in this expedition was the younger co-regent, Sennacherib himself. Babylonian rule extended over so many lands that all three of its greatest conquerors, Nabopolassar, Nabonidus, and Sargon II, appointed their sons to reign conjointly with them. In this very year 711 B.C., Sennacherib, when reporting to king Sargon,

his father, styles himself "the Great Royal Son," which title was given to Asshur-banipal when co-regent with his father Esarhaddon.

This year 711 B.C. was a very notable year in Biblical annals. It witnessed the invasion of Philistia and Palestine by Sargon and Sennacherib, their victory on the borders of Egypt at Eltekeh and the repulse before Jerusalem; concluding with the embassy of king Merodach-Baladan to king Hezekiah. It also was the date of king Hezekiah's recovery from sickness (? leprosy), the end of his exile "without the camp" from his palace, and his composition of that joyful Psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House of the Lord," and also of the end of his long bachelorhood, which threatened the extinction in direct descent of the house of David.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

Mr. BOUTFLOWER in reply, said: I am much indebted to the Chairman for his enlightening remarks as to the spread of bubonic plague. It is now clear to me that there was a plague of mice in Philistia at the same time as the pestilence in that country. Indeed, the Bible account says as much; compare the language of 1 Sam. vi, 5, "your mice that mar the land"; whilst at the close of the same verse the hand of the God of Israel is said to rest on the land as well as on its inhabitants. Is it possible that the hungry mice or rats in the starved city of Jerusalem sallied forth to taste the abundant supplies in the Assyrian camp outside, and so spread a plague amongst the enemy? With regard to pestilence, I omitted to mention that in the Assyrian Eponym List, with historical addenda, under the year 765 B.C., we meet with this entry: "To the land of Hadrach: pestilence"; and again in 759: "Disturbances in Gozan: pestilence."

I regret that I cannot fall in with the chronological scheme adopted by my kind critic, Mr. Rowlatt Jones, that Sennacherib's campaign against Hezekiah is to be identified with Sargon's expedition to Ashdod in 711 B.C. Several inscriptions of Sargon tell us of that expedition, but though Judah is described as disaffected, yet no mention is made in them of any invasion of

Judah. For the same reason I must beg to differ from Mr. Anstey, and to observe further that it is impossible to identify Sargon's capture of Babylon in 710 B.C. with Sennacherib's capture of that city in 689 B.C. Sargon was welcomed in Babylon as a deliverer; Sennacherib, with ruthless vengeance, sought to wipe out the very site of Babylon with the waters of the Euphrates, whilst his soldiers dashed the images of her gods to the ground. Both of these altogether unexpected acts were foretold by Isaiah: *cf.* chaps. xiv, 23; xxi, 9.