

by his own historian, and put away for succeeding ages, preserved by a curse, like that which guarded Shakespeare's bones, upon anyone who should destroy the record. That record tells the story of his campaign against Palestine, and makes plain, what we did not know before, how it was that Hezekiah had provoked the anger of the Assyrian king, how he had harboured the rebel king of the Philistines, and how it happened that the king's main army was at Lachish, from which city the Rabshaketh was sent to demand the submission of Jerusalem. We have on a stone an actual engraved picture of Sennacherib at Lachish, receiving the submission of the surrounding nations. All this is extremely interesting, not so much because it confirms the general historical truth of the Bible story—for that there was no special reason to doubt—but because it adds to its facts and makes it more vivid. When we find the same fact given in the records, we are pleased at the confirmation. So when the writer of 2 Kings tells us that Hezekiah gave Sennacherib thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver, and we find that the archives of the palace at Nineveh record the same tribute of thirty talents of gold and eight hundred of silver, it pleases us to remember that there was a large and a small talent in the ratio of three to eight, and that the Jewish historian made the number small by reckoning by the large talent, while the Assyrian historian made the number large by reckoning according to the small talent, while the weight of silver was the same. And when we find that Sennacherib does not record the destruction of his own army, we are not surprised, but we notice that he does not claim to have captured Hezekiah's city. We find a general agreement, and if we cannot easily settle all the points of comparative chronology we do not wonder, and we do not care much, for we keep in mind the relative value of the spiritual and the material.

Another admirable illustration of our principle is found in the book of Daniel. Fifty years ago that book was the only authority for Belshazzar at Babylon at the time of its destruction. The Greek authorities said that Nabonidus was the last king, that he was not at Babylon when it was taken by Cyprus, but at Borsippa, and that he was not killed, but captured. The conflict between the two sources of information seemed absolute. Now we have dug up from Babylon the whole story. We know that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus; that his father sent him to resist the invading army; that he failed, and that his father then left him as viceroy in Babylon while he led the army himself, and that Belshazzar was in Babylon, as the Bible says, when that city was captured, while Nabonidus was absent, as the Greek historians say. Both authorities are equally corroborated. Here is a remarkable confirmation, if we choose, of Bible history, and equally of profane history. We value it greatly, and yet soberly.

Extremely interesting is the last discovery from the monuments—that of a letter written by a successor of Melchizedek, king and priest of Jerusalem, to the king of Egypt, and discovered with a number of other old archives at Tel-el-Amarna. It is plain enough that just such a royal pontiff as Melchizedek was, reigned at Jerusalem, named Ebed-Tab, soon after his time, and this discovery illustrates and makes more vivid the Bible history of this early time. Just so it illustrates and at the same time confirms the Genesis story of the raid of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, against the five cities of the Plain in the time of Abraham, to learn from the Babylonian records that an Elamite dynasty ruled at precisely this time over Babylonia, and that Arioch, one of Chedorlaomer's associate kings, is mentioned in those records, and that we know that his father was Chedorlaomer, and his grandfather Sinitisilhak. Such discoveries answer many doubts and objections that have been raised against Bible history.

It is only fair that I should answer the question, sure to be asked, whether the monuments always confirm the Bible, or whether they ever discredit a historical statement there found. Beyond question they are gener-