

we owe to Nabunaid, the last King of Babylon (556 to 538 B.C.) This Nabunaid, though apparently of the royal line, really usurped the throne. His father was a chief priest. He became king in 556 B.C. His reign was very important, perhaps next in importance to that of Nebuchadnezzar. It would appear that Nabunaid was so interested in preserving the ancient religion, and in rebuilding and restoring the old temples, that he made over the regency of his kingdom to his son Belshazzar, in order that he himself might devote his time and attention exclusively to that pious work.

You will remember that in the Book of Daniel the last King of Babylon is called Belshazzar, and that he was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, who (Daniel iv., 37) is represented as a very religious man. Belshazzar was the son (Daniel ii., 2) of Nebuchadnezzar in the sense that Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii., 3) was the son of David, that is, he was a descendent. It was this Belshazzar that had the fateful warning in writing on the wall. The name means "Bel, save the king." He was the commander-in-chief in the war against Cyrus, and was defeated 538 B. C. by the Persians when Babylon fell. Herodotus, I., 141, seems to allude to this banquet of Belshazzar. The word that is translated, king, by us, could properly be translated regent, so that there is really no necessary contradiction between the two accounts as regards Nabunaid, who was, *de jure*, the last king. Nabunaid died three months after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus.

Nabunaid, probably about 545 B.C., when on an archæological expedition to Sippar, a town of northern Babylonia, found deep in the foundation of the temple of the Semitic sun-god, Shamash, the record of its founding by the very ancient Babylonian ruler Naram-Sin, son of Sargon. King Nabunaid has related thus, with deep reverence, his discovery :—"When I had made them dig eighteen feet deep, there Shamash, the great god of Ebarra, which temple is the delight of his heart, showed me the record of its founding by Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, a record which none of my ancestors had looked upon for 3,200 years." On the authority, therefore, of Nabunaid, who in all probability had complete genealogical records, the Semite Naram-Sin ruled about 3,750 B.C., or say 1,600 or 1,700 years before Abraham. Nabunaid, it will be noticed, says that Naram-Sin was the son of Sargon. Now, we have a short autobiography of Sargon, the great leader of the invading Shemites, which was placed in the library of Sardanapalus at Nineveh, about 650 B. C. He says :—"I am Sargon, the mighty king, the King of Agade. My mother was poor; my father I knew not; a brother of my father dwelt in the hills. My native town is Azupiranu, situated on the Euphrates,