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is little doubt that the eastern wall and three doorways, A, B, C, D, G, belong to that period, and are probably the remains of the enclosure within which the churches stood. In face of the present evidence, there is reason to accept the wall and doorway K, J, L, as part of the southern boundary, while the various other fragments become to a great extent weeded out of consideration.

The most important of these fragments which become relegated to a later date are the columns and bases *a, b, c, d* on the east, which associate so awkwardly with the wall A, B, C, D, G as to make their adaptation impossible. The rock level between these columns and the wall is undoubtedly later than Constantine, and the existence of a large flight of steps, either here or in front of the columns, is still uncertain. In fact, everything goes to prove that no such feature existed.

The arrangement of placing the churches within an enclosure is all the more interesting as it reflects the plan of the Temple area, and the Temple enclosure at Damascus (see *Quarterly Statement*, October, 1897, p. 268), which was converted into a Christian church by Theodosius (379 A.D.).

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## TALES OF THE PROPHETS.<sup>1</sup>

Translated by R. A. S. MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

### *Of Abraham.*

OUR lord the Friend (on him be peace!) while he was a boy used to take the images which his father Âzar made, to sell them. Now his father used to make images and give them to Abraham, and he went with them to sell them. He used to drag them behind him with a rope tied to their feet, and cry them in these words: "Who will buy a thing that will hurt him and do him no profit?" And the people heard him and watched him dragging those images,

<sup>1</sup> The following is a further instalment of the series collected by Yusif for the Fund. I have added a few notes, but the greater part of the tales speak for themselves.

but did not dare to say anything about it, for fear of Âzar his father.

Now when Abraham attained the age of seventeen years, and mixed with men, and was received to the feast of his countrymen, the people said to Abraham: "Go with us to the prayer at the feast of our god." Now their god was an image of stone, and it had a house of white and green marble, and in that house were seventy-three images, seated on thrones of gold. And the people all went out into the wilderness for their feast, except Abraham, who did not go out with them, and said to them that he was sick. And when Abraham was left behind, he took a pickaxe and broke all those images except the great one, and that he did not break, but hung the pickaxe on its neck, and went away. And when the multitude came back to the images they found them broken, and the pickaxe hung on the neck of the great one. And they said: "Who has done this to our gods?" And some of them said: "We have heard a youth who is called Abraham speak against them." And the sultan of that country said to them (now he was a man of great violence, by name Nimrod, and Abraham was abhorrent to him, because he had heard from the priests that "a boy had been born by name Abraham, and thy death will be at his hands"): "Bring him to me before all the people, that they may bear witness." And they went and fetched Abraham. And when Abraham stood before Nimrod, he asked of him, saying: "Didst thou do this thing to our gods?" And he answered saying: "Nay, but the great one among them did it: ask them, if they have a voice." Then were the king and the multitude enraged against him, and the king and the priests commanded that Abraham should be burnt, and their gods vindicated. And they collected an immense quantity of firewood, and piled it in a heap: and the fire spread till it burnt the crowd. And they consulted how they should put Abraham in it, since because of its heat no one could go near it.

Now Iblis the Accursed came in the form of a man, and said to them: "I will prepare for you a mangonel, and ye shall shoot Abraham into the fire with it, yourselves being far away from the fire." And they agreed to his words: and he prepared a mangonel for them, and they set about casting Abraham into the fire. And there arose an outcry of the angels of the heavens and of the earth, and they said: "Our God, our God and our Lord! Thy servant

Abraham—none serveth Thee like him upon the earth, and how shall these infidels cast him into the fire?" And Allah commanded them saying: "O ye My angels, when I ask rain of you, then pour rain." And Michael went to him and said: "O, Abraham, if thou wilt, all the rains will pour and quench the fire for thee, and all the angels will come and put it out——" and he did not finish his speech to Abraham when Allah (be He exalted!) called to Gabriel; now he is one of the angels that stand near to Allah, and it is he who descended on all the prophets and filled them with wisdom and freedom from sin. And Allah (be He blessed and exalted!) said to him: "O Gabriel, beat with thy wings upon the fire." And he beat with his wings upon it and put it out with the wind. And Allah made coolness and ease for Abraham, and made a fountain of water to run beside him, and by it was a pomegranate tree: and Gabriel brought him a bed from Paradise, with a coverlet of fine silk, and a crown, and Abraham put it on and seated himself: and no hurt came to Abraham (Allah's peace be on him!).

Now Nimrod was sitting on a lofty place when they cast Abraham into the fire, and he wished to watch what happened to Abraham. And lo! a spark flew from the fire and burnt all Nimrod's clothing, but not his body; which was not burnt in order that he might learn that fire burns nothing save by the permission of Allah (be He exalted!). And when Nimrod saw that, he said to Abraham: "Depart from our land, else thou wilt corrupt our religion." And Abraham departed, and Sarah, Abraham's wife, and his brother's son, Lot (on whom be peace!) and all that believed in him. At that time Abraham was not married to Sarah, who was yet a virgin.

The dervishes in their religious ecstasies believe that fire will not burn them, on account of what happened to Abraham the Friend, when he was in the land of Nimrod.

[A version of the foregoing story, differing in some details, will be found in Mr. Hanauer's recently published *Folklore of the Holy Land*, p. 25. It is not difficult to recognise in it a distortion of the tales of Bel and the Dragon, and of the Three Holy Children, in the Greek Book of Daniel.—R.A.S.M.]

### *Of Isaac.*

Between Isaac and Ishmael there were about thirty [*sic.*] years; now he was son of our lord Abraham (on him be peace, and upon

them!). Now Isaac was highly inspired, an apostle-prophet; and when he grew up he married a wife, and when he went in to her, his wife conceived two twin sons, one of them Esau, the other Jacob. Now it is said that Esau spoke while yet unborn, and his mother heard it and told her husband, Isaac. And he said to her: "If thou hearest it a second time, tell me." And when she heard it the second time she told him. And Isaac drew near and put his ear close to listen, and he heard Esau saying to Jacob: "By Allah! if thou art born first, I shall slay thee by slaying our mother." And Isaac forbade him. Now at the time of birth, Esau was first, and Jacob after him. Hence was Esau ('Aisa) called "the quarrelsome" ('aṣī) because he overcame Jacob, who, by rights, was the elder: and Jacob was so called (Ya'qūb) because he was late ('aḵb) in birth. And when Isaac died they buried him with his father in the city of The Friend of the Compassionate One, which is called after the name of his father. And people say that his spear is washed every Friday, and blood is found thereon.

[Evidently a reminiscence of Gen. xxv, 22, 26. I have not ventured on a literal translation of this tale: the above paraphrase, however, contains everything essential. The washing of the spear is connected with the idea that Isaac goes out and has a battue of infidels every Friday.—R.A.S.M.]

### *Of Sâlih.*

The prophet Sâlih was a pious man, and an apostle-prophet, according to their<sup>1</sup> religion. And he went one day on to a mound to direct them how to worship Allah. And they opposed him and obeyed him not: and they said to him: "We will not believe in thee till there come out to us from this rock a coloured she-camel with her young one before her, with milk tasting like honey and intoxicating like wine; and till there be cold in summer and heat in winter." And Sâlih arose to pray, and made petition to Allah (be He exalted!): and he raised his hands and stretched them forth to Allah, Creator of heaven and earth. Then he went to the rock and struck on it with his rod; and the rock was split and groaned as one groaneth in travail; then there came out from the rock a she-camel of the sort they had asked, with her young one before

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*—of the fellahin.

her ; and she cried out : " There is no God but Allah ; Sâlih is the prophet of Allah." And the king and all that were with him believed.

And after that there were two men who loved a woman, and they met at her house, and said to her : " Bring us water." And she sought among her neighbours and in the whole town and found no water. And she said : " The she-camel of Sâlih has drunk the water." And she returned and told the men. And they said : " We shall certainly slaughter her." And they laid wait for her and slaughtered her. Then they sought her young one, and it ran to the place whence it had come out, that is, the rock.

Now, after they had slaughtered the she-camel, the news was spread abroad, and they came to the camel and began to cut pieces from her flesh and send them to every house in the town, till there was not a house whereinto none of the she-camel's flesh was brought. And they began to eat of her flesh and to mock. And when Sâlih came they told him of the slaughter of the she-camel : and Sâlih said to them : " Depart, and if ye find her young one perhaps punishment will be averted from you." And they went to seek it, and found that it had hidden itself in the rock. And they came and told Sâlih. And Sâlih said : " There is no might nor power but with Allah the Exalted, the Omnipotent." Then he said to them : " After three days a mighty punishment will come upon you. And as a sign thereof, the first day your faces will become red, and the second day they will become yellow, and the third day they will become black." And when he said thus, they wished to kill Sâlih : and he fled from them, and hid himself in the house of one of their great ones. And the multitude came to the house and said to the owner : " Sâlih has entered and is hidden with thee." And he said : " Yea, he is with me : but I shall not deliver him to you, for I believe in him."

Then Allah (be He exalted !) commanded him, saying to Sâlih : " Depart from this people, thou and all that believe in thee, and go to the land of Syria." And Sâlih went out from that city, he and all that followed him : and after that there descended upon them punishment, namely, torments from heaven, and their hearts were torn from their breasts, and they died, all of them. But Sâlih, after he left that city, was grieved for his she-camel, and the angel Gabriel descended and said to him : " If Allah will, thou shalt have thy camel on the Day of Resurrection."

And now there is a proverb; when one desires a thing that is impossible, the others say: "That thing will not fall out till Sâlih gets his camel."

[A very remarkable story: it is referred to, but in an entirely different version, in the Korân, Sûra VII. Reminiscences of Lot and Sodom are obvious; but does the incident of the division of the sacred camel look back to totemistic communal feasts? The stock folk-lore motive of the Impossible Task is also to be recognised.—R.A.S.M.]

### *Of Job.*

The prophet Job was a pious man whose devotion excelled that of all others: and Iblis the Accursed had it in envy. Now in those days Iblis was not yet prohibited from ascending to heaven; and he was talking with the angels, who spoke in praise of Job for the greatness of his devotion and goodness and hospitality. And Iblis the Accursed said: "Were Job a poor man he would not worship Allah (be He exalted!): and if Allah were to give me authority over his property, he would abandon his devotion." And Allah answered Iblis the Accursed before them all: "I give thee authority over it." And Iblis the Accursed assembled his companies, and sent them into the fields and pastures of Job; and Job knew nothing of it. And great fire burst forth from under the ground and burnt all his crops, and leaped upon his cattle and burnt them also. Then Iblis came to Job. Now it was the time of prayer, and Job was engaged in prayer before his *mihrab*. And Iblis the Accursed said to him: "He to whom thou prayest has just burnt all thy crops and thy people and thy cattle, and I have come to tell thee." And Job said: "Praise be to Allah who gave to me and hath taken from me." And Iblis returned frustrated. Then Iblis mounted to heaven, and spoke with the angels, and the angels said to him: "How hast thou found the patience of Job?" And he answered: "Very steadfast is he to his Lord: but were Allah to give me authority over his children he would have no more patience." And Allah made revelation to him, saying: "I have given thee authority over them." And Iblis sent and shook the house over the children and his family, and the house fell upon them and destroyed them all. And Iblis the Accursed came to Job (who was standing in prayer before his *mihrab*) in the form of their mistress; and Job said to her: "What

is the news?" And she said: "The house has fallen on thy children and destroyed them all." And Job said: "Praise be to Allah, who gave to me and hath taken from me." Then Iblis departed from him for a space and returned in the form of their servant, and said to him: "Wert thou to see thy children now!—their blood pouring out and their bodies burst—;" and he did not cease speaking thus, as though consoling to him, till he smote on the heart of Job; and Job wept and said: "O that I had not survived!" And Iblis the Accursed wondered at those words. Then he went up to heaven, and sat with the angels, and the angels asked him: "How hast thou left Job?" and he said: "He is steadfast to his Lord, but were Allah to give me authority over his body he would have no more patience." And Allah made revelation to him, saying: "I have given thee authority over Job." And he went to Job, who was standing in prayer. And he came near and blew in his nostrils: and his brain and forehead were inflamed thereby. And Job scratched his body on a stone till he cut his flesh, and his nails fell off, and his flesh wasted away and his bones protruded, and his whole body was full of worms. Then all that remained of his family deserted him, save his wife Raḥmah. And Iblis the Accursed came to the people of that village which was near to them and wherein they dwelt, and said to them: "Drive out Job from your village lest he infect you in your bodies." And the people of the village arose and said to his wife: "Take out Job from amongst us, else we will kill him." And she carried him on her shoulders, and went with him to a ruin that was there, and she made a bed under the earth and rested beside him. And Job slept on the ground, with the worms feeding upon his body, for seven years. And when the worms reached his tongue, Job was in great straits, and he said: "O Lord, evil has come upon me, but Thou art the most merciful." And Allah heard his prayer, and commanded Gabriel to go with a pomegranate from Paradise. And the angel Gabriel came and offered it to Job, and gave it to him; and when Job ate it and it descended into his belly, there went from him all the evil that was therein. And the angel Gabriel said to him: "Strike the ground with thy right foot." And he struck the ground as the angel commanded, and there sprang up a well of cold and a well of hot water. And Gabriel said to him: "Wash in the hot, and drink of the cold." And when he did so, his flesh returned unto him like silver. But Iblis the Accursed went away from Job



abashed. And because he was patient under all these afflictions he is called "Job the Patient."

[This truly prosaic paraphrase of the greatest of poems will also be found, with many variations, in Mr. Hanauer's book above quoted, p. 17.—R.A.S.M.]

(To be concluded.)

## A JERUSALEM CHRISTIAN TREATISE ON ASTRONOMY.

(Continued from Q.S., p. 258.)

BY MISS GLADYS DICKSON, JERUSALEM.

*Of the Matters concerning the Birth of the Year and how the Rains  
will be in it.* [28]

If the year be born on *Saturday* eve it indicates goodness of crops, much wind, abundance of olive oil and vetches,<sup>1</sup> the outbreak of dissensions in Africa and among the Arabs. The winds will be in March, April, and May, the summer will be hot; in the end of the year there will be mortality. If it be on *Sunday* eve the rains will be mixed with snows and the rivers will overflow, winds will be excessive, the crops good; there will be fighting in the Western countries and mortality among the aged. Prices will reduce; there will be shortage among cattle. It will be dry in March, and among some people there will be various diseases. If it be on *Monday* eve it indicates great rains and contentions and shedding of blood; the harvest will be advanced, and the west winds will blow strong in February and March. There will be sickness among cattle; the crops and the vetches and the wine and the oil will be good. There will be sudden mortality, and fever will increase. If it be on *Tuesday* eve it indicates outbreak of smallpox and occurrence of wars and increase of snow in Syria and a dry spring. The rivers will overflow and the simoom wind will increase. The fruit will fall. Disease will befall women with child. The dearth of prices will be reduced in [29] the end of the year. From October to January will be dry. There will be shortage of honey and fruit; *samn* will be dear. Avoid riding horses. If it be on *Wednesday* eve it is harmful for corn and barley and vineyards. Fruit will increase. The rain will be excessive, the cold little, and Palestine and Jerusalem and Egypt will be fruitful. Corn and olive

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, peas, beans, lentils, etc. (pulse).