

DIGGING UP THE BIBLE.

BY REV. WM. HAYES WARD, D. D., LL. D., Editor of The Independent.

It would be difficult to deny any request from the successor of my much-loved friend, Gilbert Haven; and in memory of him, if for no other reason, I am glad to write briefly on the subject assigned me. But first let me express the great pleasure it has given me to observe how faithfully the present editor has kept up the traditions while maintaining all the advanced enterprise of one who did not leave his independence when he left the editor's chair. Zion's Herald is one of those papers that still have a mission to do justice to the enfranchised Negro, and that never forget the debt we owe that race. For this reason I always had a special kinship of sympathy with Zion's Herald and its editor.

The Bible has not been dug up, and never will be dug up. It has not been buried, and never will be. What has been dug up is

AN IMMENSE AMOUNT OF LAST HISTORY

illustrating the Bible. The Bible, that different from other books, is what St. Paul tells us it is when he says (2 Tim. 3: 15) that "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The distinctive mark of the Bible, that which accounts for its being given by inspiration of God, that it is profitable for the religious purposes mentioned above, and is authoritative for these purposes. Other books may be as true, as inspired, as correct, as the Bible, but they are not profitable for the purposes mentioned by Paul. Now when we have dug up the Bible, not the Bible, but history, we learn from it something we did not know before about people mentioned in the Bible; or something which the Bible has already told us is told us again. All this is important, and is very interesting, because we get a peculiar respect for the cover of our Bible and its blank leaves, so we do for its history. There were a hundred pagan kings of Mesopotamia who were very little for the Bible, but they were very interesting, because they were mentioned in the Bible as one who rebelled against the king of Judah. When, then, a stone was found twenty years ago in Babylon containing Mesha's own account of his rebellion, and the king of Assyria, it was very interesting, and was glad myself to give weeks to its study; but it was not Bible. It did not make the Bible one whit more profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. It only illustrated the Bible in its historical and non-vital part, in that which is its lifeless vestige, and not that which is its living soul.

We must not forget the definition of our Lord. The word which I speak unto you, it is spirit and it is life. It is that which is spiritual and vital which is valuable; the lesson, not the parable. My parable of the Bible would compare it with the rind, the shell and the kernel of a nut, take a walnut in my hand and tear off the rind; that has been valuable; without it the nut could not have grown; but it is without life, unproductive, cannot grow, cannot maintain or reproduce itself. The kernel is the shell; it has been useful, essential, has protected the life within, and has grown with it; but it has no inherent life, as seed as the wood in the tree before me, is equally unable to maintain or reproduce life. But within these envelopes is the kernel which is all life. It maintains its life when dropped from the tree; it will support life, or it will grow into a new and multitudinous generation of life. The Bible has grown with its concentric parts, some of them protective and some vital; all important, but not all equally so; its spirit and its life are at its centre. It is the kernel of its history—out of that kernel, and could not have grown otherwise—but in that there is no life; that is not the Bible we hold dear. It needed its harder shell of argument or doctrine, necessary to its growth; but this is not its life. The kernel of its life is in the word which is food for the soul and stimulus for the conscience; it is in the bread of life and the water of life which Jesus gives. That is vital and that is nourishing. Of course the parable is not perfect; the parable is not the kernel of history and instruction, are closer connected in the Bible, here and there, than they are in the nut; but the parallel holds nevertheless, and we must, in our thought and study of the Bible, keep ever in clear distinction the true kernel, the relative value of its vital part, and the comparative worthlessness of what is lifeless and, it may be, as in the case of the elaborate Jewish ritual, transient, imperfect, and only relatively true.

THE GAIN

which we, as lovers of the Bible, get from these remarkable discoveries in the ruins of old and buried cities? Simply this—clearer and clearer understanding of the history which the Bible is set. The Jew is precious and the setting is interesting and important. We value the setting as well as the jewel, but not as much. We keep in mind their relative values. We know that the setting is for the jewel, not the jewel for the setting. We will dig out of Nineveh or Babylon or Palmyra nothing about the doctrine or instruction, but we will dig up much about the history, much that was in the Bible, but not in the essential Bible.

When the palace of King Sennacherib of Nineveh was dug up, his own contemporary annals were found, written in his own hand, by his own order, by his own historical and literary secretary, which was as good as Shakespeare's books, upon which he had so often destroyed the record. It was found in the story of his campaign against Babel, and makes plain what we did not know before, how it was that Sennacherib had provoked the anger of the Assyrian king, how he had been driven out of the city of the Philistines, how it happened that the king of the Assyrians was at Lachish, from which he fled, and how he was driven to the submission of Jerusalem. We have 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 the 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 H. Zedekiah 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 by the small. The Greek authorities said that Nabonidus was the last king, that he was not at Babylon when it was taken by Cyrus, but at Borsippa, and that he was not killed, but captured. The conflict between the two authorities of information seemed absolute. Now we have dug up from Babylon the whole story. We know that Nabonidus was the son of Nabonidus, that his father sent him to resist the invading army, that he failed, and that he later then left him as viceroy in Babylon while he led the army himself, and that Nabonidus was in Babylon, as the Bible says, when that city was captured, while Nabonidus was absent, and is very interesting, because the 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.

Exciting and interesting is the last discovery from the monuments—that of a letter written by a successor of Melchizedek, king and priest of Jerusalem, some years after this time, and this discovery illustrates and makes more vivid the Bible history of this early king. It only illustrates the Bible 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 king of other cities, and to confirm the Bible, or what the historians say, 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 Melchizedek. 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 the historical statement there found. Beyond question they are generally confirmatory, but they sometimes raise new difficulties, chiefly chronological; and occasionally, on some unimportant matters, they seem to contradict a Scriptural statement. Perhaps as positive a case as any is that of Darius the Mede, who is said to have taken the rule of Babylon on its capture by Cyrus. It was a Mede, a Babylonian (Gobanes) and Darius, who became governor of Babylon, according to the monuments, and Darius was a later king. It is possible that there may be a copyist's error—that easy device for explaining a difficulty—but it is likely that the confusion was in the mind of the original writer. It is a small error, and it is quite unimportant how the error arose, as the statement that it was Darius is not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or for instruction.

I might multiply examples of confirmation and illustration indefinitely, but my purpose now is rather to

WARN AGAINST PUTTING TOO MUCH WEIGHT UPON THEM.

They can answer many objections against the correctness of Bible history, but they can add no positive argument for inspiration, much less a solution. They can illustrate Bible history, but they cannot confirm it. They are of value within a historical period, but they cannot go back to the succession of kings into the realm of the origin of human history without carrying us into a cycle of myths, instructive and interesting, but without historical value. The Babylonian story of the Flood or of the creation of the world is extremely interesting, and valuable for comparison with the Genesis story, but their form is completely mythological, and they are of no worth, for historical purposes. They are valuable chiefly by way of contrast with Genesis, their crude, coarse polytheism being the very opposite of the unparaphrased religious lessons of the Hebrew word, which is of one only God who alone created the heavens and the earth, who destroyed the race of men for their sins, who sent Noah and his family and gave him the moral precepts which are the civilization of the nineteenth or twentieth century need not be ashamed to worship. Still it is the religious teaching, not the statements of history, which is the essential and valuable instruction of the Bible, in which we hear the voice of Divine inspiration—Zion's Herald.

A TRADITION CURRENT IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

tells that when one of the Covenanting preachers, and his little band of hearers had been surprised on a hillside by the military, the minister cried out, "Lord, throw Thy mantle over us, and protect us." And immediately a dark sky there fell a mist, which rendered safe and protected the pursued from the pursuers.—Aton.

Christ's Dwelling-Place.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

That is a wonderful promise which Jesus makes when He offers to come into our hearts and "make His abode with us." Paul must have had this gracious promise in his mind when he prayed for his Ephesian brethren that "Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith." At the door of every heart-house Jesus knocks, and conversion signifies the opening of that door and giving Him a welcome. When He first enters, He finds the house filthy and disordered. It needs cleansing, and the more thorough the work of purification, the better. Pride must abdicate its throne, and covetousness surrender the key to its treasure-chest. The foul pictures that sensuality may have hung upon the walls of many an ungodly heart must go out of the window. "Behold I make all things new," saith the new Master, and a blessed house-cleaning doth He work when His searching Spirit is given free range from the heart's recesses.

Memory is one of the apartments of the soul which the divine Spirit renews for a holier use. Many of its accumulations were sorry rubbish. Christ does not destroy the faculty itself; He appropriates it and makes it new truth and experiences, so that by-and-by it becomes a treasure house of joy. Happy the Christian whose memory is piled up with tiers of Bible texts and precious promises, and with grateful recollections of the more wonderful interpositions and answers to prayer. Memory is a frightful prison-house to the man who sees nothing within him but the ghosts of his own guilt, and is haunted by the specter of lost opportunities and lost hopes. But to the pardoned believer the recollection of past transgressions brings the solemn joy that all these have been swept away by atoning love. To such a man as Spurgeon memory is useful as it makes with new truths and curiosities and a jewel room of rich and rare experiences accumulated through a life-time.

We cannot describe all the apartments of that heart-house which our King cleansed and makes with new truths and curiosities and a jewel room of rich and rare experiences accumulated through a life-time.

It is interesting to note that the Bible is full of references to the "dwelling" of the Spirit. "Behold I say unto you, all that I wish" From that lofty coign of vantage Faith looks out through her vine-glass and catches a marvellous glimpse of the Celestial City with its jeweled battlements and streets of shining gold.

"For glimpse such as these, My willing soul will leave, All that I wish, or pain, or care."

We must not overlook one room in a converted heart, though it be a small and secluded one. It is that sacred closet of devotion where faith holds sweet fellowship with God. That room is fragrant with the presence of Him who saith "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love." The mercy-seat stands in the little inner chamber; and on it is carved the golden assurance that whatever we ask in faith it shall be given unto us. On the walls are records written in hours of happy intercourse with the Master, who on the meditations of His words, sweet, and when His right arm was under our heads, and His words of love were like the droppings of the honey-comb. That inner room is the sanctuary of the soul. It is there especially that Christ dwells in our hearts, and that is the vital stronghold on which everything depends. If that heart of our heart is deserted, and its door rusts on its hinges, and its mercy-seat is abandoned, then the whole house soon goes to ruin, and the life of the soul is as long as Christ is kept enthroned there, our whole soul is full of light and we are the "habitation of God through the Spirit." All this is not a poetic notion, nor a dream, nor an ungodly delusion. It is a solid and sure, and lime reality. Jesus Christ offers all that I have described, and more too, when He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he will eat with Me."

"Matiyu."

We have on our table a deeply interesting volume of 44 pages, clearly and beautifully printed, and neatly bound. We cannot read one line of it, yet we welcome it as a treasure and it awakens deep emotion. It is a volume containing the four Gospels and Acts in the Eromangan language, translated by Rev. H. A. Robertson, and printed under his supervision. It is the precious volume which is now in the hands of the Eromangan converts and by means of which their minds are being saturated with the thoughts and words of the Lord Jesus.

This volume carries us back more than fifty years, to the shores of a darkly heathen isle of the New Hebrides group. A good man whose heart had been a benediction to tens of thousands, who one ambition was to diffuse the knowledge of Christ, was eagerly approaching the Eromangan shore. He knew the germs of the venture. Bravely, yet not without misgiving, he and his companion stepped on shore. Both were speedily assaulted and slain by cruel savages. The explorers were John Williams and his companion, who had landed on Eromangan some years before, and of John Williams we read in the Eromangan church, willing to be taught and to teach.

Twenty years after the murder of John Williams, a student of our college, a minister and steward of our church, gave himself to the work of evangelizing Eromangan. George N. Gordon and his wife spent four arduous and perilous

years among the heathen, not without tokens of success, for they had gathered round them a band of faithful disciples whom they were training for the Lord. Deadly epidemics of fever swept the island, and malignant men from other lands told the Eromangan the missionary was to blame for the dread invasion. Some, perhaps many, believed the foul charge. A band of murderers waylaid Gordon and slew him suddenly as he was returning to his humble mission home. And Mrs. Gordon also she slew beside her door as she stood inquiring for her fallen husband. Thus for the second time the Gospel light seemed utterly quenched on Eromangan.

A devoted brother of the fallen missionary at once sprang to the front saying, "Here am I; send me!" And our saddened and sorrowing church gladly accepted him. By and by Gordon, a man of rare power, endurance and perseverance—a splendid specimen of a man. He devoted himself with patience and diligence to the work in Eromangan. He was at work upon the island for some time, and by the aid of the people, he won the confidence and respect of many of the people. The work seemed promising, when, suddenly, he too was smitten down by the hand of the assassin.

For the third time the light on Eromangan seemed to be extinguished. Again a Nova Scotian, a sturdy Pictou boy, Hugh A. Robertson, volunteered to assail this stronghold of violence, treachery, and cruelty. Mr. Robertson and his wife, the first wife, were of good courage, trusting in the Lord. For years danger seemed to be not far away. The utmost vigilance was observed, while at the same time every proof of kindness and love was afforded to the people. By and by the cloud of heathenism was taken. The leading men of the island became obedient to the Gospel, and gladly co-operated with the missionary and his wife in all their good work. Mr. Robertson taught them useful arts of civilization. Roads were opened up where most useful. Schools were established in the places most densely settled. Gospel instruction was given to the people, old as well as young, and they have profited greatly. Many have been baptized; many have sat at the Lord's table commemorating the love of Him who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. Eromangan is now virtually a Christian island. The people can read the wondrous story of the life and death of Jesus.—Presbyterian Witness.

Anecdotes of Mr. Spurgeon.

An interesting reminiscence is given by a correspondent to the Record concerning Mr. Spurgeon's plain dealing. A well-to-do doctor of a country Baptist church once wrote him urgently soliciting him to go and preach in the village in aid of the poor congregation, who, having put up a new chapel, were struggling to get the congregation. Mr. Spurgeon ultimately consented to go. The doctor then wrote him asking whether he would like to stay at his town house, or country house, or marine residence. Mr. Spurgeon, in response, wrote saying that he had evidently been under a misapprehension. He had agreed to go, and preach on the understanding that the cause was a poor one, but under the circumstances now set forth he felt he must withdraw his consent, and suggested that the rich doctor should himself sell one of his houses, and pay the debt.

HIS CORDIAL MANNER.

Rev. John Burnham writes in the Baptist: Twenty years have passed since I first grasped his hand, but the memory of that day is fragrant still. I had never spoken to him, but only seen him in the distance; hence it was with considerable fear and trembling I waited on him after one of his Friday afternoon college lectures. Taking me warmly by the hand, as though he had known me for years, he opened the conversation in such frank, homely fashion that in less than ten minutes he had my fear and trembling had vanished, and I felt perfectly at home and at ease in his presence. He then spoke to me of the year he had opened the conversation in such frank, homely fashion that in less than ten minutes he had my fear and trembling had vanished, and I felt perfectly at home and at ease in his presence. He then spoke to me of the year he had opened the conversation in such frank, homely fashion that in less than ten minutes he had my fear and trembling had vanished, and I felt perfectly at home and at ease in his presence.

A BIT OF INNOCENT FUN.

Well-to-do remember, in company with some half-dozen being seated with him on his lawn one summer afternoon, when Mr. Spurgeon suggested that he should sing a verse. Mr. Spurgeon told him that "Punch" (his favorite dog) was not a linguist, but certainly could detect a foreign tongue at once. Dutt looked incredulously at Mr. Spurgeon, and suggested that one brother (I think it was Mr. Chamberlain) should sing a verse. "Punch" sat beside his master and looked up approvingly. Now, Mr. Dutt, you sing us a verse in your native tongue. No sooner did Dutt commence than "Punch" howled most vigorously until the singer had ceased. "Now, Mr. Burnham, you sing us a verse," and again the dog was perfectly still. I could not say whether there was some secret understanding or *de facto* between the president and "Punch" (I have my own opinion on that), but I distinctly remember Mr. Spurgeon's enjoyment of the fun, and Chamberlain's astonishment at the remarkable exhibition of canine intelligence.

HIS MEMORY AND KINDNESS.

When once he had looked a brother in the face he seemed never to lose sight of him. That brother might settle in a quiet corner of the land, where most men would forget him; but he would now and then have a pleasant reminder that he was not forgotten. These reminders in the shape of a 25 note and a cheery letter have brought sunshine into many a country inmate beside the writer's.

It is pretty generally known that Mr. Spurgeon was ever free and generous; but, perhaps, few have had better opportunity than I of knowing of his quiet, untrumpeted deeds of generosity to the poor pastors of our village churches. To me it was always a marvel how he kept in touch with the humblest brother, and knew of his circumstances and needs. The following is a fair specimen of dozens of cases that have come to my knowledge through these years of work in our country churches. A poor brother is completely "run down," altogether unequal to the strain of service, but has not been able to afford the much-needed holiday for four or five years. A letter

comes in the neat, familiar hand of C. H. S., suggesting a holiday, and offering to forward a £10 note if the brother promised to try for this purpose at once; thus the pastor and his wife have been enabled to hasten to the seaside just in time to have a serious breakdown.

THE BOW AT A VENTURE.

Mr. Spurgeon related the following striking cases of drawing the bow at a venture. I supposed the case of a young man who had got into fast company, and once there meant; to have his firing unfeared; so was on the eve of starting to India, in order to escape the restraint of a godly, widowed mother's influence. I pointed to him, and pleaded with him to retract his steps ere yet he had broken his praying mother's heart. At the close of the Monday evening prayer meeting a young man was shown into my room by William Olney. As soon as alone with me he wished to know who had informed me as to his movements. He could scarcely believe me when I told him I had received no information concerning him, and did not even know his name. The same week, after the Thursday evening service, another young man wished to see me alone; wanted to know who had been telling me about him? I asked, "What about him?" About his fast life, and his intention to leave the country and escape his praying mother's influence? He had been very distressed ever since. I pointed him out and appealed to him on Sunday evening; he wished to see me about it, but could not come on Monday evening as he had intended. "But," said he, "there is one mistake you made, Mr. Spurgeon; you told the people I was going to India, and it is China I am booked for."

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Sabbath School BIBLE LESSON SECOND QUARTER (Condensed from Peabody's Selected Lesson VI. May 8. Ps. DELIGHT IN GOD'S HOUSE. GOLDEN TEXT. "Blessed are they that dwell in His house."—Ps. 84. EXPLANATORY. STANZA I. LONGING FOR AND PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD. 1. How amiable. How lowly of being loved! But in more persons, how dear Thy tabernacles. The tabernacle Moes made in the wilderness any place where God is worshipped. The plural, "dwellings," has reference to the sub-division and appropriation of the sanctuary into various places, the holy of holies, the hosts. Jehovah, who rules all of the universe,—the multitudinous and organized and organized angels, men, stars in the sky, beings, all that possess life, are all under His control, organized to do His will, so that He may make all things work together to them that love Him.

2. My soul, myself, as a soldier, personal being. The human nature which the writers ascribed the most characteristic of personality. Length. "hath grown pale" as with the of feeling; when the soldier's cry out, "I have won a victory!" It notes a strong child cries when sadly hungry every whit of the child cries, face cries, and feet cry. Christ's longings are about His people. "Into the living God, a person who feels and loves and cares for the souls of the universe," or "some intruder," or "power to do righteousness." 3. In the sparrows, "the ray of light, small as a moth found her an house. I saw were as numerous, peering out from their holes, many times as at the present day, persons in the Bible that are their various characteristics, the most forcible that could be the house of God fortified by the presence of His people. It could be too humble; if God sparrow, then every much more precious disciple. O Lord of King and my God. This shows the personal application and the personal nature of the psalmist, with poetical feeling, recollects that even enjoy the sacred place from which he excluded, they unconsciously excellence, he pining for its presence. The Church, Beautiful, where the pilgrim strayed and refreshed, is a perfect picture of a church home one's own house should be a home, the things about it, the school room, the prayer room as delightful as the family home. But that which makes it not the house, but the family, the family spirit, the Holy Spirit, and brothers and sisters of one faith should take pains to make others feel at home. When once preached on "the recognition in heaven," a young man, who had been a soldier, was saying that he wished the new world upon "the recognition on earth," for he had been there for three months, and had spoken to him. The church is a home, where the Holy Spirit and the church that neglects to show no home-welcome, and decline, and it ought to do not want such churches. 4. Blessed are they. "Blessed are they," "Blessed in every way, on that dwell in Thy house. Not only occasional visitors, but bless have a home there, are blessed make a great mistake who meet the best of God, when they run from church to church stay away, and have no regrets. They will be still, i. e., always, ly, praising Thee. The very is to praise God. Those who God's house will have a spirit, and they will always have an of things for which to praise Selah. Probably an interlude instruments playing alone louder music, instead of the that accompanied the singing. STANZA II. THE PILGRIM'S HOUSE OF GOD. In this stanza sees in his vision the people the highways out of the house of the pilgrims, to the house of G. Selah. The pilgrim band, forget the trials and difficulties; hope changes the rusty waste into living fountains; waste blossoms as if the sweet Hope sustains them at every station to station they draw nearer of their journey, till at last before God, present themselves in His sanctuary. Such success is the general passage. 5. Blessed is the man whose heart are the highways to Jerusalem to Zion is in vain after thoughts; he delights to journey. Others with King's fessor Toy make "the way equivalent to 'Thy way'" (From a godly manner of life. "Passing through the valley 'The valley of weeping'")

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