

EVIDENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

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The revelations made to the archaeologist by Egypt have been exceedingly those made to him by Babylonians and Assyria. The antiquity of Babylonia lies with that of Egypt. The earliest Babylonian monuments brought to Europe, and now in the museum of the Louvre, testify to the existence of an ancient literature as well as to an extensive commerce by sea and land. The districts out of which the monuments were carved was imported from the distant land of Magan, the name under which Median and the Peninsula of Sinal were denoted. Some of the spoils recently excavated at Niffer by the American expedition—the "dramas" of which have been published by Prof. Hilprecht—are contemporaneous monuments of King Sargam of Accad, who lived as long ago as 3,000 B. C.

But art and literature already flourished in Chaldaea. One of the most beautiful specimens of Babylonian art is a seal which was engraved during his reign, and he was the founder of a great literary work famous in the annals of Babylonian literature. The ruler of Sargam, however, was not limited to Babylonia. He established an empire which extended as far as the shores of the Mediterranean sea. Four times did he march into the land of the Amorites, and he eventually succeeded in welding all Western Asia into a single kingdom. His son and successor pushed his conquests still further, and, taking the road afterward trodden by Darius, he invaded the empire of the king of Magan, and so became master of the upper river of Sinal.

Fifteen hundred years later a Babylonian king still claims dominion over Syria and Palestine, and shortly afterward, Chedor-Nebo, the Elamite, overthrew of Babylonia and the father of Eri-Aku of Latta, in whom we must see the Anthon of Genesis, is called by his son "the father of the Amorite land." But the present dominion of Babylonia under the rule and influence in Western Asia are most clearly exhibited by the cuneiform tablets found in 1887 at Tel el Amarna, in Upper Egypt. They consist for the most part of letters and despatches addressed to the king and governors of Babylonia and Assyria, Mesopotamia and Kappadokia, Syria and Palestine, to the Pharaoh Amenophis III and Amenophis IV, towards the close of the eighteenth dynasty, at the time when Palestine was a province of the Egyptian Empire. They show that the Babylonian language and the complicated and difficult writing of Babylonia had long been the common medium of literary intercourse throughout the West. Though Palestine was now an Egyptian province, its officials used the language and script of Babylonia even in their correspondence with the Pharaoh himself. What this means is evident. Not only does it point to a long continued influence of Chaldaea upon Syria; it also shows that throughout Palestine there must have been schools where the foreign language and syllabary were taught and learned, as well as teachers and pupils, readers and scribes. Nay more; there must have been archive chambers in which the official correspondence was preserved, and libraries, like those of Babylonia and Assyria, where the literature on clay was stored up. That such was really the case we know from fragments of Babylonian clay books which have been found at Tel-el-Amarna, one of which has been marked with red ink in order to facilitate use by the Canaanite student.

The books in question contain old Babylonian legends, among them being an account of the creation of man and the introduction of death into the world. A broken copy of the beginning of it, written on the tablets of Nineveh a mere 800 years after, the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna had been buried under the soil, I found and translated several years ago. It was a full century before the extent that the city in whose site Tel-el-Amarna stands was destroyed, and the tablets stored in it lost and forgotten, so that already before the birth of M. Sec, Babylonian literature and Babylonian legends of the crime of man and the world had been known and studied in Canaan as well as on the banks of the Nile. Now it has long been known that there is a Babylonian background of the earlier chapters of Genesis. The discovery of the Chaldaean account of the deluge placed this fact in the clearest light. We have only to put the Chaldaean and the Biblical accounts side by side to see how closely they resemble each other. And the resemblance on the Biblical side is shared alike by the "Jehovistic" and "Elohist" narratives which the critics detected in it. Before either "Jehovist" or "Elohist" wrote, the Babylonian story must have been known.

On the other hand there are no differences between the Biblical and Chaldaean accounts, which indicate that the former was composed in Palestine, and not in Babylonia. Thus, for example, the ship of the Chaldaean Noah is replaced in the Biblical narrative by an ark, as would be natural in a country where great rivers did not exist. We can not, therefore, suppose that the Biblical account was derived from a Babylonian source, in the period of the captivity. And there is no other period when it is likely that Babylonian literature would have had an interest for a Hebrew writer, even were known to him until we go back to the pre-Mosaic age of the Babylonian influence in Canaan. It was then that the old legends and traditions of Babylonia made their way into the West. And most of them were already very old even in their literary form. The story of the deluge, for instance, discovered by Mr. George Smith, in an episode in an epic which was written before the second millennium B. C., and the episode itself was of earlier date.

most important lesson which the tablets have taught us, still remains to be considered. It is that the age of Exodus is an age of extreme literary activity, and the Israelites and their leaders lived in the midst of educated and literary populations. Egypt, where they had sojourned so long, was, as we have seen, a land of scribes and of writing. Everything was written upon: the walls of tombs and temples and houses, as well as the small objects of everyday use. Go where they might, letters and inscriptions stared them in the face. Canaan, the goal at which they aimed, was likewise a country of schools and libraries. It had absorbed the literary culture of Babylonia, and Kirish Sephar or "Booktown" was not the only city in which contained libraries or a scribe chamber. Even in the desert the Israelites were surrounded by literary influences, if we may accept the conclusions of Dr. Glaeser and Professor Hommel.

Inscriptions have recently informed us that the authority of the civilized kingdom of Yemen and Hadramant in Southern Arabia extended over the centre and north of the peninsula as far as the frontiers of Palistinia and Ethiopia. In the neighbourhood of Tema—the Tema of the Old Testament—the names of three of the kings of Ma'in or the Minians have been met with. Glaeser and Hommel urge weighty arguments in favor of the view that the kingdom of Ma'in flourished and fell before that of Saba, the Biblical Sheba, arose upon its ruins. If, as some of the numerous Minian inscriptions which have been discovered will go back to an earlier age than that of Moab, Saba was already dominant in Arabia in the days of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III, and Sargam, while the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. In this case a knowledge of alphabetic writing would have been carried to the very district which witnessed the wanderings of the Israelites, long before they arrived there.

But even if the Minian is late prove to be of less antiquity than is now supposed, the archaeological evidence for the highly literary character of the age of the Israelites is sufficiently numerous and certain. To imagine that the Israelites alone were buried in a shallow ignorance, while the populations around them were busily engaged in reading and writing, is contrary to probability and common sense. To prove anything so incredible requires arguments and not assumptions; and the arguments have not yet been produced. That they will ever be forthcoming may be permitted to doubt. The assertions of the "higher criticism" are thus at irreconcilable variance with the discoveries made and the evidence of oriental archeology. The documents upon which the Pentateuch rests are not of the late age to which the critic would refer them, and the narratives they record belong to history and not to romance. The Mosaic age is a literary one, and it was just the age when the chronicles and legends of Babylonia would be best known in the West. There was no other time when there was a Jewish writer, and he could refer to the legends of the younger brother of Mitrain, or when a Canaanite proverb could have been current about the Babylonian hero Nimrod. Nor was there any other period when a Hebrew writer was so likely to embody in his narrative the extract from the annals of Babylonia which we find in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, and which Assyriological research has so thoroughly verified. For the time is long past when the Pentateuch as it is was rooted in the Mosaic age.

The Bible is not intended to teach us science or history. This is very true, but we need there is no necessary connection between its revelation and that of science, there is a very close and living one between its contents and the facts of history. If the Hebrew law is not what it professes to be, and what the Christian church from the days of its Founder has always assumed it to be—an authentic record of early Israelite history and a witness to the Mosaic age—not only is Judaism deprived of its claim to divine origin, but the Christian church is also, in so far as its presupposes Judaism, is similarly deprived. The same methods and principles which have served to destroy the credit of the Law will be equally efficacious to destroy the credit of gospels.

THE CHRISTIAN UNITY.

The sermon preached by Rev. George Dana Boardman, D. D., at the close of his thirty years' ministry among the First Baptist church of Philadelphia, has been published in a handsome pamphlet. It is a notable discourse in many ways, but chiefly in its discussion of a question that has agitated Christians more than usually of late years—the unity of the church some years ago. Dr. Boardman proposed an interdenominational conference for church unity, in which he outlined a method by which Christians might become organically one without compromise, all adopting the distinctive principles of each, and thus reaching a larger truth as well as a larger and united church. Printing this as a footnote to one of the paragraphs of this discourse, the author says, with dry humor, "I have grown to see more and more the futility of this project. Instead of this proposal, in which no new classes with other attempts at human manufacture rather than recognition of divine offspring," and there was a firm belief in what he now believes and what we also believe to be the true idea of church unity.

Church unity does not mean outward uniformity of creed or polity, does not mean that the members of a national church are to be made of the same material as that is found throughout nature, many different members, but one common body. It is not to be realized by abolishing each, for each has its distinctive mission; not by compromise, which is a way of avoiding each, and thus missing the truth. The church must unify herself by comprehension—not by extension but by inclusion—inclusion to the extent of Christ's own horizon, a comprehending all that fall upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours. And the very marrow of the matter is found in two paragraphs that we quote in full:

"That new shall not unity by compromise, for it is not unity. I use to present for a moment catholicity as the ideal church form. For each Christian sect, in so far as it has Christ's own spirit, does have, as we have seen, its own divine mission. Each sect is a gift of God to the world, and each has its own shining principle, the union of which makes the white light. For it is not given to any one man, or to any one set of men, however great, to comprehend all truth for, if it were, men of different nations, different ages, different climes, different modes of life, would be at variance. Accordingly, while sectarianism is born of sin, and is devilish, acts of horn of finiteness, and may be even arguable, do not try, then, to secure unity by sweeping distinctions to monotonous one flatness. But try to secure unity by soaring high enough to comprehend diversities; even as God's own sky comprehends ocean and forest, valley and mountain, man and beast.

"As a matter of fact, the only definition in reaching its own goal is to be a structure, does work selectively. That is to say, each sect, in building its own creed or polity, builds on the remembrance of certain Scriptures which it regards as favorable and on the oblivion of certain other Scriptures which it regards as unfavorable, equally skilled in the art of remembering and in the art of forgetting; dexterously eliminating that which does not support its own dogma or its own necessities of each case. In other words, each sect errs, not so much in what it believes as in what it fails to believe. The coming ideal church will be built not on a selection of scriptures, but on the Bible in its wholeness. Can there be any better way of bringing about the unification of Christendom than by the occasional and coincidental interchange of Christian views in quiet and informal conferences of representative thinkers of all communions? If the church is ever to be perfected into one, that perfection will be effected, not by resolutions of convention or decrees of council, but by the gradual and silent permeation of Christian sentiments throughout Christendom. It seems to me that leaves little to be said. There has been a good deal of glib talk about the necessary church unity; an utterance like that of Dr. Boardman clears the air. What we need first of all is a clear and definite conception of the end to be sought. If that end is some organic unity, still more if it is uniformity, whether of creed or of organization, it is foredoomed to failure. Neither by surrender nor by compromise can all the denominations of Christians be brought to range themselves under one banner—at least such a thing is hopeless within the lifetime of any who read these words. But a genuine catholicity, a real oneness of spirit under a diversity of forms, is certainly possible. And the means by which such oneness may be attained is set forth in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth. The true unity is of the church, the only unity worth striving for, or worth waiting when it is won, is that which binds us, not polity nor creed, but love.—Examiner.

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"TRUST IN HIM AT ALL TIMES."

Thus did David write. The words are very easy to pen. No profound wisdom is required to put such words into a sentence. Anyone can utter them without any hard mental effort. Almost everyone will say that the truth conveyed in these words is a reasonable one, and that the sentiment is a beautiful one.

And what Christian is there that says, "We ought to trust in God at all times, and not the other part?" or that says, "Sometimes we may trust in the Lord, but there are times when we need not?" Certainly no Christian when looking at these words, will say that he ought not to trust in God at all times. No Christian cares to say, or feels like saying, that as a theory—indeed, as a principle—these words are not worthy of all acceptance, and should not be the rule of all times. But how is it about the practical side of the question? Is there any flinching when one attempts to put these words into practice in all the circumstances of life? Do we Christians find it as easy to trust in God at all times as they do to accept the words as a statement of truth? It would seem that they do not; for are there not times when our faith falters under the shock of a crushing calamity? Do we not cease to trust when the very foundations under our feet seem to be crumbling and tottering to destruction? Are not our heavens sometimes black with terror when our hearts fall from fear? Do we not, then, sometimes experience such a reaction of faith, following its strongest, intensest tension and disappointment in its expectations, that we lose our sharp grip on God and His promises and fall prone in agonizing supplication for the aid of some friend to say, "I cannot trust God now! I see no use of it; my faith is smothered."

"But remember that to be tempted to trust in God at all times is not the same thing as having no trust in Him. A bad case is not a weak case. We may be sure that we are really trusting in Him more than ever. Yet we must admit it is harder to trust in God sometimes than it is at other seasons; it is harder in cases where our hearts are so dark and where the material terror than we are to look toward God and rest in Him. We may be very weak from pure exhaustion, and yet in such times, when our own God is trusting in Him. We can afford to trust in Him at all times, for everything is to be gained.—Religious Herald.

ANGING A POINT.

I heard a story the other day about a church member who was being badgered by one of those "coyotes from the bad lands." He had expressed his belief in the Bible, but the unbeliever said to him, "And you believe everything in the Bible?" "Yes," "I suppose you have read the story of the building of the ark?" "Yes." "About its being so many hundred feet long, and so many feet wide, and so many feet high, and big enough to hold all those people and all those animals—elephants and all?" "Yes." "Well, now, what do you think of that story of the Israelites carrying that great ark all those long years, more or less? And the church member who had read the Bible for years but "had not hidden the Word in his heart," had nothing to say. He actually did not know the difference between Noah's ark and the ark of God! Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you, but in doubtful disputations, if a point comes up for discussion, and you know what the Bible says upon it, quote it in its own language. Be wary of giving your own interpretation as a substitute, for that is dangerous. Plant your feet upon the solid granite of the Word and do not attempt to build some platform of your own conception and designing and then to stand upon that. Do not try to adjust your Bible to what this or that man says science teaches. Science may say itself to the Bible, and the Bible may say itself to science, more or less, may elapse before she does it, do it the most ultimately.—C. F. Dean, in Young Men's Era.



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THE DEAD POET.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES. Oct. 7, 1884.

Sombre! the rare light of this fall October; One, loved of all, in that he loved all men, Hath drifted out—toll, bells, in cadence sob— Hath drifted out beyond our utmost ken.

Poet, he trod earth's chaffering market-places In singing robes, his strain the lark's note high; Sere and sweet, a lane of anxious faces Smooched out their troubles as his step passed by.

Philosopher, the wisdom of the ages, Filtered and sparkling, his had made his own; In various toads, his white and gleaming pages Caught inspiration from the morning's sun.

No shaft of his was tipped with any malice; No word embittered left that smiling lip; Alike to struggling souls in cot or palace His genial will brought brave good-fellowship.

His sun goes down to-day in cloudless splendour; 'Tis we who linger in the loneliness shade, Missing henceforth the music gay and tender. The throbbing blitheness of the times As played

Last of the minstrel through we held in honor; Ay, least of all dearer, with hushed voices we lay. Our voices wreath, when roiled, a pall upon her, She sits, his grieving cly by the Bay. —Margaret E. Ripley, in Harper's Weekly.

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