

the fact of the Exodus, begins with the migration of an obscure Semitic tribe into the land of Canaan in the 13th century, B.C.

The practical individualist asks why we should trouble ourselves with the dry bones of Biblical antiquities, seeing that the Scriptures are above all, a moral dynamis, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Even the solidarist regards the historical record as valuable only because it sets forth the spiritual progress of the race under the spiritual guidance of Divine Providence. But there has always been a large class of inquirers, by no means the least earnest and intelligent, who, while recognizing the spiritual power of the Word in regeneration, and delighting in the story of the gradual redemption of the race, have sought to present to their imagination a truthful picture of the ancient life of the chosen people of God and their contemporaries. Very many writers in all Christian lands, and at different periods, have ministered to this lawful desire, presenting in forms, more or less realistic or imaginative, the main facts of biblical epochs, by means of material furnished from sources external to the scriptural narratives. The names of these authors I hesitate to enumerate, lest I should fail to mention some that are most worthy of commendation.

Much of this material has been derived from records or chronicles provided formerly by ancient writers of history, but lately by contemporary monuments in eastern lands. Very great service has been rendered in connection with the physical geography, topography, natural history and antiquities of Palestine and the neighboring countries. But a great deal is yet to be desired. The completeness of these studies in some respects stands in marked contrast to their incompleteness in others; and in no respect is this contrast more decided than in the fulness of geographical detail as compared with the meagreness and utter indefiniteness of ethnographic notice. Not only is this true of the older historical geographies, such as that of Ritter, but also of such recent works as those of Drs. G. Adam Smith and McCurdy. Having made a long and careful study of the nationalities of