

the actual documents prepared by their authors. As old copies had worn out, new ones had been made, and most of the classical or Biblical documents in existence today were copied many centuries after the time of their original writing.

The events recorded in the Old Testament occurred long before most of those mentioned in the classics. From Greek sources we knew a few facts about great empires existing before 500 B. C., but the material was not extensive, and much of it was considered highly questionable. The Old Testament stood almost alone in its picture of events during a period of over a thousand years. The other portion of the Bible, the New Testament, also dealt mostly with events of which little mention was preserved in the classics. Thus, before modern archaeology was developed we had practically no evidence from any outside source as to the truth or falsehood of the bulk of the history recorded in the Bible available to us.

Today, as a result of the development of archaeology, this situation has been vastly altered. Objects actually used by ancient men can now be studied minutely. The inscribed tablets which have been dug up in Mesopotamia can be read, and many additions to our knowledge of ancient life and culture secured from them. Great Egyptian monuments, whose hieroglyphic, picture-like signs had seemed mysterious and inscrutable for many centuries, now speak to us in comprehensible words, since the excavation of the Rosetta stone has furnished the key to their decipherment. Material objects and writings from ancient lands, buried or unreadable through the ages, now become useful tools for the increase of our knowledge of ancient history.

When we speak of the relation of the Bible to archaeology, we really mean its relation to ancient history, knowledge of which has been so greatly increased by archaeology.

Although the Bible is not primarily a book of history, since its purpose is not to present history but to teach religion, its contacts with ancient history are far more extensive than those with chemistry, geology, or any other scientific field. The result is, of course, that it is impossible in a short article even to mention the great majority of the contacts. All that can be done is to survey the field in general, to state a few important principles, and to illustrate these by examination of some particular instances.

#### I. PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL BEARING ON THE BIBLE

##### *Egypt*

The bulk of the archaeological material related to the Bible comes from three particular areas. One of these is Egypt, a land which looms large in the mind of every reader of the Bible because of the dramatic passages in the first half of the book of Exodus which tell of the forcible deliverance of the Israelites from oppression. This event was prominent in the thought of all subsequent periods and there are many allusions to it. Both earlier and later than the Exodus there were occasional historical contacts with Egypt, but comparatively little of the remaining Biblical narrative takes place in that country.

A century and a half ago Egypt was regarded as a land of mystery and of magic. Little was known about its history in ancient times. It was clear that a great civilization had once existed there, because of the great monuments which stood in various parts of the land. On many of these were long rows or columns of pictures of men, snakes, household implements, and other things, arranged in such a way as strongly to suggest that they formed inscriptions, but there was no clue as to how they might be read.

Then in 1799 Napoleon's engineers discovered in the Rosetta mouth of the Nile a large stone slab with an in-