

or economic life of the Hebrews are scarcely touched upon, while great space is devoted to what was important for their spiritual lives.

It would be absurd to look for archaeological corroboration of every statement in the Bible. A large portion of the Book deals with matters which are not susceptible of archaeological confirmation. Nor can we expect that every important event in the history of Bible times will be described in the Bible, since that is not the purpose of the Book. Just as one could not write a handbook of chemistry or geology from the Bible, neither can one expect to write a full history of ancient times from it.

An interesting illustration of the fact that the main purpose of the Bible is not to present political or economic history is found in connection with I Kings 9:26-28, where mention is made of the building of Solomon's seaport at Ezion-geber on the shore of the Red Sea, but nothing is said of the great smelter or refinery which he built there to prepare the metals to be sent to Ophir on his ships.

Dr. Nelson Glueck, formerly Director of the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem, and now President of the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati, excavated at Ezion-geber in 1938-40. He found there a complex of industrial plants with air-channels connecting the rooms so arranged as to utilize the wind which blows steadily southward at that point. He says of it:

"The entire town, in its first and second periods, was a phenomenal industrial site. A forced draft system for the furnaces was employed, and later abandoned and forgotten, to be re-discovered only in modern times. Ezion-geber was the Pittsburgh of Palestine, in addition to being its most important port."<sup>18</sup>

Thus archaeological research has thrown light on a phase of the power and wisdom of Solomon not even mentioned in the Bible, and this discovery, like that of the true signi-

<sup>18</sup>N. Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan*, (New Haven: 1940), pp. 89-104.

ficance of the straw in Egyptian bricks, shows that much applied science which was known in Bible times has been lost and only recently re-discovered.

It is important for the Bible student to remember that archaeology also does not give a complete picture of ancient times. At best it is only a partial means for construction of such a history. A comparatively small portion of the material objects used in antiquity has been preserved, and their interpretation is often difficult. The inscriptions were not usually written in order to tell future ages exactly what happened, but to fill some present purpose. Even the historical inscriptions of the Assyrian kings cannot be accepted at every point as true history, since their purpose was to glorify the king, rather than necessarily to give a true history. Sometimes archaeologists find evidence that such an inscription deliberately lied. Reconstruction of ancient history from archaeological sources is often a long and difficult task.

In addition to this, most of the inscriptional material has come from Egypt and Mesopotamia, lands far remote from Palestine. Often there are contacts between these lands and Israel, but we could hardly expect their statements to be identical even in references to the same event. Japanese and American war communiqués might sound very different, even when giving news of the same battle.

A unique feature of the Bible is that it contains denunciations of Israelite people and Israelite kings for their wickedness. Its accounts are far more objective than those from these other lands, which constantly reveal their political bias. It would be unnatural to expect verbal correspondence between the statement of an Israelite about a contact between Israel and Assyria, and that of an Assyrian. Each might know details which were unknown to the other. Each would select certain matters which he considered interesting and worth recording. Yet comparison often brings