

1. Are religious beliefs which the Bible represents as being the result of revelation from God, actually derived from the beliefs of heathen nations?

2. Are events which the Bible presents as fact merely a development of heathen myths or legends?

In view of the wide-spread teaching of both of these ideas, Biblical archaeology is vitally important to the Christian. Only with its help can he carefully examine each suggested instance and determine the true situation regarding it.

### III. CONCLUSION

During the past century and a half archaeology has brought to light a tremendous amount of material enabling us to see the Bible not as a book that stands entirely alone, but as one that describes events which occurred in the midst of a great world of many conflicting forces and tendencies. Our Christian denominations were founded by men who believed that the religious teachings of the Bible were revealed to its writers by the Creator of the universe. They believed that God supernaturally directed the writers in such a way that even though they would express their own personalities and use their own literary styles, their writings would be kept from errors of fact, of doctrine, or of judgment, and would present the ideas which God desired should be the basis of the religious life of His people through the ages.

The purpose of the Old Testament was to prepare for the coming of Christ and to lay the foundation for the great doctrines which He and His apostles taught. The purpose of the New Testament is to present and explain these doctrines and to show mankind how they may be saved from the darkness and misery which has come as a result of human sin.

Through the discoveries of archaeology we are in a position to understand many of the external features of the Bible far better than before. We are able to see the reality

tionship as a fact, although explaining it in various ways, but where today most first-hand scholars are coming to recognize that no real relationship exists, should make us cautious about accepting claims of relationship without very careful examination. There is always the possibility that familiarity with Biblical language has influenced the translator of the other story at a vital point, or has been used in the attempt to guess what formerly stood in a part of the narrative where the tablet has been broken. The elements of suggested relationship must be tested to see whether they really prove anything, or are such as might naturally occur in altogether unrelated materials. If relationship is proved, the question must be raised which of the two was borrowed from the other, or whether both show recollection of an actual event.

We must recognize, of course, that the great body of *cultural* features of Biblical history were taken from nations around them, and that such matters as types of literary style might freely come from various sources. It has never been the accepted view of the Christian Church that all the Scripture was dictated by God, or received by the writers through direct revelation. The view of Christians has been that God revealed certain sections of the Bible, and that these are usually labelled by some such phrase as "and the Lord said." The rest of the Bible has been considered to represent the observations and thoughts of the writers, guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and kept by Him from error as to fact, doctrine, or judgment. Thus the book of Luke begins with a statement that the author has carefully investigated and gathered the information in his book. A Biblical writer might secure historical information from a heathen source; the Christian would merely insist that such facts as the writer was led to include in the Scripture were true. The problem of derivation concerns itself properly with two questions: