

aroused tremendous interest. Others continued the work of these men, until about 1860. By this time a great number of statues and other relics of ancient times had been excavated, and many of them had been taken to the great museums of Europe. For about ten years interest in excavation waned. Then it was suddenly reawakened by a rather dramatic event.

In December 1872 George Smith, an employee of the British Museum, announced that he had found among the tablets brought from Nineveh an account of the flood which closely resembled that in the Bible. Great interest was aroused by his report and the proprietors of the London Daily Telegraph contributed money to send George Smith to hunt for additional tablets. Smith led two expeditions, extended the trenches of his predecessors at Nineveh and discovered many important inscriptions, but in 1876 he suddenly died of fever at Aleppo. His career had stirred the interest of the whole western world, so that many western nations now began excavation in Mesopotamia, which has been carried on with few interruptions from that time to this. Numerous cities have been excavated and careful study has been made of their remains. Each city excavated has increased our skill in the technique of excavation, and our ability to interpret finds correctly. Much has been learned about ancient fortifications, temples, palaces, and so forth. Comparative study of the materials has added much to our knowledge, but to the Bible student even greater interest attaches to the many thousands of clay tablets that have been dug up and placed in museums in many parts of the world. Mesopotamia is remote from the scene of most of the actual events of the Scripture, and consequently the material remains from Mesopotamia, important as they are for the study of ancient history and culture, and interesting as they are intrinsically, are not nearly as important to the Bible student as the literary remains. In this article