

enable us to note the amazing degree of accuracy in the preservation of names that was attained by the Hebrew text. Even more striking is the way in which the names of the rulers of Mesopotamia and Israel are arranged. They occur in the Bible in the same combinations and in the same chronological arrangement as in the Mesopotamian records, something that could never have happened by chance.

7. Relation to Interpretation.

Babylonian material is of help in the interpretation of the Bible at a great number of points. There are many references to Babylonian and Assyrian kings, and to Mesopotamian matters and customs. Archeological material makes these far easier to understand. An interesting illustration occurs in Nahum 1.12, where the Authorized (King James) Version reads: "though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down." The American Standard Version says, "though they be in full strength, and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down." The Revised Standard Version reads, "though they be strong and many, they shall be cut off." It is hard to get much sense out of the reading of the Authorized Version. Why should the fact that they are ^{quiet} ~~peaceful~~ constitute a reason for difficulty in conquering them? The other two make good sense but are a guess rather than a translation of Hebrew. The word translated "quiet," "in full strength," or, in the RSV, simply "strong," is defined in our leading Hebrew dictionary as meaning "complete," "safe," "at peace." The word which two versions render "likewise" (and the RSV omits altogether) really means "so," or "therefore." No one of the versions renders it this way, because it would not seem to make sense in the context. RSV inserts a footnote, "Heb. uncertain." It is plain that no one of the versions has the real thought of the verse. Commentaries have made guesses differing widely from one another. Mesopotamian studies now enable us to know the true meaning. God