

THE BIBLE IN MODERN LIGHT.

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IT is necessary, as careful students, to take stock from time to time so that we can see clearly where we stand at the present in relation to the past, and even more in relation to the future, in order to see whether we can continue in the future with our work. Has there been gain or loss? Have we gathered new and better knowledge, or has there been bankruptcy?

For some decades now there has been great intellectual unrest. In every department of knowledge we can see the signs of this unrest. When in 1859 Darwin gave to the world his epoch-making work, *The Origin of Species*, he effected a revolution such as the world had not before experienced, not even when the Copernican theory was advanced. Even the man on the street saw that something had happened, and it was not long before both he and the man in the study began to apply the Darwinian theory to facts other than physical or physiological. Besides the evolution of man we hear of the evolution of literature, religion, politics, customs, art, etc. The past in all its parts has been examined, and the authorities of the past have been challenged. We do not ask to-day how old a thing or an institution or an authority is, but what its relation to us is to-day. We do not ask if a certain thing held a certain place a hundred or a thousand years ago, but whether it has a right to hold that position to-day, and if so, why.

To some people such unrest and questioning are sure proofs of the total depravity of the human race, and they must be suppressed as works of evil. To others—and we believe their number is growing daily—such signs are the signs of a belated spring, the life-springing of a new era which shall be more completely under the influence of the spirit of truth.

We cannot, even perhaps though we would, stop the world-

questioning. While it is destructive along some lines it is constructive along others. Perhaps many will be pained; we are certain that more will be blessed. What we need to guard against is the foolish attitude of standing on the beach with a besom trying to sweep back the incoming tide. The tide is under law and will come on without let or hindrance, and the man who would sweep it back will wet his feet, and perhaps take a cold.

Whether we believe it or not we are all "new theologians." Even the most conservative cannot look at the world and the thought of the world as did his conservative father. By this I do not mean that we have accepted any particular system of new theology, but I do mean that because a man lives in this age that he is under the influence of this age to a greater or less degree. We must be "moderns," we cannot help it. Text-books of Greek, Latin, biology, zoology, etc., used a generation ago will not suffice for the student to-day. Just because we are alive we need a change. We must progress with the times for the simple reason that every generation is bringing with it new problems, new facts, new knowledge.

Our purpose, however, at this time is with one department of modern thought. We wish to know what effect all this intellectual and spiritual unrest has had upon the Bible. How does the Bible stand to-day? Has it still its place as aforesaid? Has it a right to its former place? Or has it been dethroned in these days of revolution and sent into exile? Can it stand the test of the age under the light of the age? In fact, what is the light of the age? Such are some of the questions being asked on all hands.

We are told that never in the history of the church has the Bible been so much studied as to-day. Never has there been a time when the Bible was demanding so much attention as at this very hour. Men in all walks of life are studying it, and yet at the same time we cannot overlook the fact that in the churches there is an appalling ignorance of the actual contents of the Bible. Dr. Forsyth, in his *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* says: "The Bible... has ceased to be the text-book of his [the preacher's] audience. The Bible is not read by the Christian, or even by the church-going public, as a means of grace greater even than church-going. Our people as a rule do not read the Bible in any sense which makes its language more familiar and dear to them than the language of a novel or the press. And I will go so far as to confess that one of the chief miscalculations I have made in the course of

my ministerial career has been to speak to congregations as if they did know and use the Bible."

There is still a superstitious regard for the Bible on the part of the majority in our churches. They are willing, like the monks of Tibet, to place it on an altar and go through a ritual before it. But it is a fetish, an idol, a thing to worship, not a message to be studied, accepted and followed. That we know more about the Bible than did our fathers we are willing to admit. At the same time we have to admit that we do not know the Bible itself as well as they did.

This has been an age of great Biblical commentaries, encyclopedias, dictionaries, helps. Clergy and laity alike have contributed to all these, and oftentimes the laity have shown a Biblical scholarship as keen and as profound as that of the recognized leaders among the clergy. Such research has meant for this age, as for no other, a wonderful increase of light, and it is our purpose to look at the Bible in this light. We can touch on only two rays at this time—archeology and comparative religion—but these, together with criticism, are the most important of all.

ARCHEOLOGY.

A wonderful field has been opened to the Biblical student during the last one hundred years by the archeologists. And yet the value of archeology is not fully realized by the majority of students. To many the very name suggests what is dry and uninteresting. It is the mere collection of curios for museum cases.

No doubt much depends upon the make-up of the individual, but we know more than one for whom archeology is among the most fascinating studies. It gives us back the life, literature, religion, manners, customs, of our forefathers. We see their hopes, we know their fears, we know what manner of men they were. It is an all-important study for the Bible-student and for the student of history in general.

The Bible is an eastern book, written by Orientals of the long ago. How shall we read it? How shall we approach it? Through western eyes, and under the dominance of western ideas and standards? To do so will be to fail to grasp its meaning. We cannot understand the literature or life of the Oriental without becoming Orientals. How shall we understand the Oriental then unless we study his monuments, etc.? Much misunderstanding of the Bible is due to this neglect. The extreme conservative on the one hand, and the extreme literary critic on the other, have both failed because

they treated the writers of the Bible too much as if they were writing in western studies in fear of western newspaper reviewers.

The East has a peculiarity all its own. We cannot take for granted that an Oriental means what we mean even though we use the same words in the same order. That eastern world has been opened to us of late and it is possible for us to enter into the life and mind of the unchanging East. From mounds, temples, graves, houses, palaces, have come the remains of vast civilizations. Egypt, the land that can rightly be called a vast cemetery, has yielded up its tens of thousands of monuments until we know the life and thought and religion of those ancient Egyptians almost as well as they knew these themselves. Babylonia and Assyria have given up the secrets of their mounds from the time when Claudius Rich gathered his few cuneiform tablets and Rawlinson climbed the Behistun rock and copied the inscriptions there, until to-day we can walk along their streets and enter their temples and feel that we know those ancient Semites to-day as well as we know the people across the ocean. Palestine is now yielding up its secrets to us, and as the result there are hundreds of scriptural problems being solved in the new light. The explorers and excavators have been busily at work in Arabia and already their researches are proving to be among the most important for the Biblical student.

It is impossible to characterize the remarkable discoveries made in Asia Minor in a few words. Even to say that they are epoch-making is not enough. Those who have studied the works of Ramsay will be the first to declare that their New Testament is a new book. And what shall we say of the wonderful discoveries made in connection with the great Hittite empire? The vast territory of the Hittite empire is being explored most thoroughly, and though we cannot as yet read their writings, we know what manner of men those Hittites were, and we see them holding their own among the nations of the world in a way we could not have imagined a few years ago. So rapid has been the change wrought by the discoveries that even the publishers are feeling the acuteness of the problem. Writing not long ago to a well-known firm of publishers in New York for a long-promised volume we received the following letter: "We have not published in the 'Library of Ancient Inscriptions' the volume on the *History of the Recovery and Decipherment of the Ancient (Egyptian) Inscriptions*. It was thought best to defer the publication of any further volumes in this set for at least a few years as there are such rapid changes taking place with reference to the ancient East, and there are frequent new discov-

eries, so that it would not be advisable to issue any further volumes just at this time as they would soon be greatly out of date."

This is a slight indication of what the study of archeology means to-day. The ancient Oriental world in which Israel lived, and which so helped to mould its life and thought, has been brought back to us from the grave at a time when it was particularly needed to correct many wild theories which have been given to the world from the schools of extremists, conservative and liberal. We have been told so often that we are the heirs of all the ages. We are, without doubt; but how many of us have claimed our heritage? Many write and speak as if the archeologists had never lived and worked. We could name a number of volumes on ancient history used in colleges and high-schools we could well afford to be without, in spite of the fact that they have been written during the past few years. Some of our modern books have been written in total disregard of the discoveries in those ancient lands.

If, as is stated by Droysen in his *First Principles of History*, history is the effort of the present to understand itself by understanding the past out of which it has come, how are we to understand the present or the past apart from the study of archeology? The new school of German historians, represented by Droysen, tells us that we can realize or understand the past in one way only; we must live it over again with those whose records we study. We appeal then to Cæsar. Archeological research is all-important in and for the study and teaching of history whether that history is the so-called secular or sacred. It is not our purpose at this time to give the history of archeological research, for that is too large a subject for such a paper as this. If one wishes to read the account from the Biblical standpoint he cannot do better than procure the *History of Babylonia and Assyria* written by Prof. W. R. Rogers of Drew Theological Seminary, where he will find a well-written account of both the discovery and decipherment of the Assyrian monuments. Another valuable work is *Excavations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century* by Hilprecht.

A number of societies are at work in the field to-day and all of them publish detailed accounts of their work with which it would be well for the student to keep in touch. The Egypt Exploration Fund has given back to the world a number of Biblical sites as well as thousands of monuments. It has also collected thousands of papyri, the discovery of which, as we shall see later, has worked one of the greatest changes in the realm of Biblical study so far known. Annually it publishes volumes dealing with the general

excavations and also special volumes dealing with the papyri. The Palestine Exploration Fund is a society for the accurate and systematic investigation of the archeology, the topography, the geology and physical geography, the manner and customs of the Holy Land for Biblical illustration. Not only does it publish a quarterly statement, but also valuable books dealing more fully with work in Palestine, as well as maps, and plans, models and casts of the objects found, photographs and slides, so that the student is enabled to keep himself thoroughly up to date. Then we have a number of societies in Europe doing splendid work in Palestine, Babylonia and Egypt. Neither must we overlook the Egyptian Research Account, the Society of Biblical Archeology, and the well-equipped Pennsylvania University Babylonian Expedition. These will suffice to show that this can be truly called the century of archeological research. Even the tyro can see that these discoveries are bound to have a far-reaching effect upon the study of the past, and particularly upon the study of the Bible.

For the influence of Assyriological research upon the Old Testament allow me to quote the words of Friedrich Delitzsch: "Assyriological research which sprang from the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh has above all shown itself fruitful for the science of the Old Testament, and for its promises to bear still more fruit. For not only is the Assyrian language most akin to the Hebrew, affording new information on questions of grammar, lexicography, and phraseology, but there is scarcely a book of the Old Testament the interpretation of whose subject-matter has not been aided to some extent by the cuneiform monuments. The narratives and conceptions of the creation of the world in the Book of Genesis—the serpent as the arch-enemy of the Deity and embodiment of all sin and malice, the ten patriarchs, and the catastrophe of the deluge which destroyed primitive humanity, so well known and familiar to us from childhood—appear in a new light through the surprising parallels which the Babylonian-Assyrian clay books furnish. The Old Testament history, especially that of Israel from Chedorlaomer to Belshazzar and the Achæmenian kings, interlinked with the history of Babel and Asshur, continually receives new light from the latter. The chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel is, through the chronology of the Assyrian empire, placed on a more secure basis than was possible before; and since in the annals of the Assyrian kings mention is made of the kings Ahab and Jehu, Pekah and Hosea, Ahaz and Hezekiah, the possibility is afforded of comparing more than one narrative of the historical and prophetic books—

as for instance that of Sennacherib's campaign against Jerusalem—with the records of the opposing side, Hebrew antiquity is connected by hundreds of threads with that of western Asia, particularly of Babylonia and Assyria. The deeper insight which we now have into the belief and cults of the gods, especially into the nature of the sacrifices of the Babylonians, their conception of the winged angelic beings after the manner of the cherubim and seraphim, their views of life after death, their bestowing of names, the peculiarities of the psalm poetry in form and matter, their manners and customs, their system of measures and weights, etc., directly serve the advancement of Old Testament theology and archeology."

I have quoted this from Delitzsch's lectures on *Babel and Bible*, (p. xxii), a book well worthy of attention, though it must be read carefully. A very useful book is *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*. This latter volume contains in English translation all the Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian inscriptions yet discovered which illustrate the Old Testament.

For the influence of Palestinian excavations let me quote the words of Professor Kittel of Leipsic: "The results of the Palestinian excavations confirm, enrich, and often complete the picture given to us by the Bible of Canaan in the days of Moses and Joshua. Further, they give us important knowledge concerning the later periods; but above all, they have given us a new and unexpected vision of early Canaan and have made known to us the fact that the country had already attained a high state of civilization when the Israelites invaded it under the leadership of Joshua.

The bearings of Egyptian archeology upon the Old Testament we will leave, and will treat of its bearings upon the New Testament later. The significance of the discoveries among the remains of the Hittites we cannot deal with at present. We are still waiting for the key to the hieroglyphics of the Hittites. Archeology has suffered a great loss in the death of Hugo Winckler to whom we were looking for a speedy solution of the problem. We owe a great debt to Professor Sayce for his many contributions to the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* dealing with the Hittite language. Neither can we now discuss the amazing discoveries in Arabia, but must leave the student to study the works of Hommel, Glaser and others. No student can afford to neglect the two great works by George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and his two-volume work on Jerusalem.

The science has moved rapidly since Robinson gave the world

his *Researches*. Palestine is too large a subject for any one man or even one society. Four names we feel we ought to mention at this point in connection with Palestinian excavation: Benzinger and Schumacher, who carried on the work at the site of the ancient Megiddo, Sellin who carried on work at Taanach, and MacAlister who had done such good work at Gezer.

In connection with the archeology of the Old Testament we have to watch certain tendencies at work to-day. So enamoured have some scholars become with the wealth of Assyriological material that they seem to have the idea that the whole of the ancient world outside of Babylonia was simply a Babylonian back-wash. On all hands we have been reading the word "Pan-Babylonianism." Winckler, Jensen, Delitzsch, Zimmern, Jeremias and some others would have us believe that there is nothing original in the Old Testament. They send us back to Babylonia for practically every Hebrew belief, rite, custom and law. Winckler said that "the land of Canaan has never been anything but a domain of Babylonian civilization." So strongly have some scholars argued that one lecturer said not long ago: "These recent tendencies make it appear that the question as to the place of the Babylonian element in the form and substance of the Old Testament writings is at present the question in Old Testament studies." At the other extreme we have Prof. Albert Clay turning the whole matter completely around and arguing that "the Semitic Babylonian religion is an importation from Syria and Palestine, that the creation, deluge, antediluvian patriarchs, etc., of the Babylonian came from Amurru, instead of the Hebraic stories having come from Babylonia, as held by nearly all Semitic scholars." What we need to pray for is the spirit of discernment so that we can distinguish between the facts discovered by the scholars and the fancies they would have us accept as facts.

But we must stop at this point and turn to another field. Perhaps in the whole realm of archeology nothing has been so far-reaching in its influence as has the discovery of the papyri. Since 1897 thousands of flimsy sheets of papyri have been discovered in the sands and tombs of Egypt. The history of the recovery of these is one of the most fascinating stories ever told. Space forbids our dealing with it, and we must be content to refer the student to the volumes published by the Egypt Exploration Fund in connection with its Greco-Roman branch, edited by Drs. Grenfell and Hunt.

These documents are of the highest importance for philological criticism and for historical and archeological studies, and throw

a flood of unexpected light upon an interesting period. It is at present impossible to measure the far-reaching influences yet to be exerted, but when one has seen the great mass of papyri in the possession of Grenfell and Hunt after a few seasons in Egypt, or the collections in the British Museum, the Bodleian at Oxford, Berlin, Heidelberg, Leipsic, Vienna, Paris, New York, Chicago, and California, we estimate that the influence will be profound.

We cannot deal with this subject as a whole, but must limit ourselves to the bearings of these documents on the New Testament, and that in the briefest possible manner. No study has so completely revolutionized our ideas of the structure and language of the New Testament, for scholars are well-nigh agreed that the starting-point for the philological investigation of the New Testament must be the language of the non-literary papyri. All Greek scholars have recognized the great difference existing between the Greek of the Classics and the Greek of the New Testament. We need not state the many theories advocated to account for this difference. Enough now to state that the Greek of the New Testament is colloquial. The discoveries of the past few years make this the key to the whole question under discussion. In a popular Greek grammar written for New Testament students we read: "Their Greek [the New Testament writers'] would amount to nothing other than a translation of their native tongue, together with the native idiom; their thinking was all in Aramaic, while their words were in Greek." Page after page is written in a similar strain, and quotations from the works of many scholars are given in support of the theory.

All this has changed during the last decade by the study of the papyri. We cannot any longer build up profound arguments on the "special renderings" of "Biblical" or "New Testament" Greek. The "Hebraisms" one after another are found to be not "Hebraisms" but ordinary every-day Greek words used by the common people on the street and in the market. Deissmann does not allow more than one percent of the vocabulary of the Greek Testament to be originally "Christian" or "Biblical" words. We must look on the Greek of the New Testament as just the Greek of the man on the street during the Roman imperial period. Time and space prohibit our illustrating this, and again we must refer the student to the literature upon this subject, particularly the work of Deissmann, Moulton, Milligan, Grenfell and Hunt, to name only a few. We are sincerely hoping that more attention will be paid in this country to this field of research. Already it has meant the discarding of

many a New Testament Greek Grammar, many a commentary, many a sermon. Even the classic dictionaries, such as Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, and Wilke's *Clavis Novi Testamenti* will have to be rewritten. The literature is becoming abundant, but we would particularly urge the careful study of the volumes of *Oxyrynchus Papyri* edited by Grenfell and Hunt and published by the Egypt Exploration Fund.

What has archeology done for the Bible?

It has given us back the Old Testament world and the world of the New Testament. It has enabled us to place Israel among the nations of the world. We can now see the men with whom the Israelites came in contact. We can watch the development of the life and religion of the Jewish people as never before. We can watch the people of the New Testament day and see the forces against which the new evangel had to contend. One of the most important things is that we can watch the life of the man on the street. So far we have seen only the great and mighty, kings and courtiers, generals and statesmen. Now we see the peasant and artisan, the soldier and common trader. Christianity made its appeal to the people in the language of the people.

We must carefully guard ourselves against two extreme schools when we come to the summing up of archeology and its value for the Biblical student. On the one hand we have the extremely conservative scholars, such as Professor Sayce and his followers, who argue as if archeology had proved every detail of the Old Testament to the hilt and had forever made the conclusions of higher criticism appear absurd. On the other hand we have those who believe that archeology has been one long chapter in their favor when they come to the disproving of the Biblical record. We find Sayce writing: "In dealing with the history of the past we are thus confronted with two utterly opposed methods, one objective, the other subjective, one resting on a basis of verifiable facts, the other on the unsupported and unsupportable assumptions of the modern scholar. The one is the method of archeology, the other of the so-called 'higher criticism.' Between the two the scientifically trained mind can have no hesitation in choosing." Because he appeals to the scientifically trained mind we are willing to allow this statement to go forth without comment.

Without wishing to appear hypercritical where a scholar so great as Professor Sayce is concerned, we would like to give just one specimen of his method of argument. Not long ago he made the startling statement: "The vindication of the reality of Menes means

the vindication also of the historical character of the Hebrew patriarchs." Such a style of argument is bound to bring prejudice in time, for the "scientifically trained mind" is bound to ask what connection there is between the first king of the first Egyptian dynasty and the Hebrew patriarchs. Many of the conservative Biblical scholars of to-day are very much like the conservative theologians of a few years ago, willing to build a whole system on a few gaps. Such a method is a sad mistake. We can find much to use for the illustration of the Biblical record. Many striking proofs have been given. On the other hand we have, in all fairness, to admit that archeology has also given its disproofs.

Even the disproofs are valuable, as is seen in the case of the chronology of the Old Testament. If there has been a perplexing problem the Biblical student had to face, it is this problem of chronology. Now, thanks to certain monuments which contradict the Bible story, we can rectify that chronology and arrange the events of the national life in their due order.

This is the merest summary, but we believe it is sufficient to convince the student that he lives in a day of most wonderful light, and that he can now read the Bible as it actually is. We have not dealt with individual monuments. Perhaps some will think we ought to have discussed the code of Hammurabi, or the cylinders of Sennacherib, or the Logia, or the Elephantine papyri. This was not our purpose. Enough if we have caused the student to turn his attention to a vast and fascinating field of research that offers more reward than most fields to serious students.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

Perhaps, strictly speaking, this should have been dealt with under the head of archeology. It is better, however, to deal with it separately since it is independent of archeology as such even while depending upon archeological research for its data. "Comparative religion assumes that religion is already in existence. It deals with actual usages, which it places side by side to see what light they can throw upon each other. It leaves the task of formulating definitions to philosophy. It is not concerned with origins, and does not project itself into the prehistoric past where conjecture takes the place of evidence."

Our method of dealing with religions has been too atomistic. It has been enough for the great majority of men to divide the religions of the world into the true and the false, placing the Jewish and Christian religions under the title true, while all other religions

have gone under the title false. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury could refuse to attend a congress of religions on the ground that as a clergyman of the English Episcopal church he could only sanction the one true religion, the Christian.

Ours is a scientific age. We seek to connect all things where possible. Monism prevails in the scientific and philosophical world. No longer do we treat the various branches of science in isolation, but rather do we seek to connect them into one whole. The same spirit is prevailing in other departments of thought, particularly in the study of the manifestations of religion in the world. We do no longer study the religion of Babylonia, or Egypt, or Persia, or Israel, or Greece, or Rome as if they were the result of spontaneous generation. In spite of their diversities the religions of the world spring from one common impulse. We must remember that "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth." While it was manifested in an especial degree in the religion of Israel, and particularly among the prophets, its activity is universal and is manifested everywhere where men sincerely seek God. If we maintain that God has an influence on men, if we believe that God reveals himself to those who seek him, then we must believe that God does not hide himself from any one who honestly seeks and desires him, but reveals himself whether it is to Hammurabi, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Isaiah, Jesus or Paul. There are differences of degree in the revelation, but the revelation is due to the same Spirit. Not one religious system of the world has developed independently of the other religions. From all the corners of the earth scholars have gathered facts bearing upon the religious life of the race, and we see that man is, indeed, incurably religious. Until within the last few years we have had a few ideas of the great religions of the world, but of the religious life of men in general we were ignorant. Now we can read the fifty volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*, with the Gifford Lectures and the Hibbert Lectures, as well as hundreds of other works, including the great *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. This is one of the most wonderful works issued from the modern press, its purpose being to give an account of all religious and ethical beliefs, and all religious and moral practices throughout the world.

As we have already stated, we cannot any longer divide the religions of the world into true and false. We cannot religiously or scientifically put the Jewish and Christian religions on the one side and say that they only are true. Rather do we believe with Lowell:

“God sends His teachers unto every age,
 To every clime, and every race of men,
 With revelations fitted to their growth
 And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of truth
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race.
 Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
 The life of men, and given it to grasp
 The master-key of knowledge—reverence—
 Infolds some germ of goodness and of right.”

It is impossible to deal with this science at all adequately in a paper like this, even when we intend to deal with only one branch of it, that bearing on the Bible. That even the religions of the Bible cannot be exempted from the study of comparative religion should now be evident to all serious students. Just because they are historical religions, the products of certain historical periods and conditions, they must submit to the historical test.

The ancient Hebrews belong to a definite race, the Semitic. They belong on the one side to the life of the desert, and are akin with the nomad Arabs, on the other they are related to the authors of the Babylonian culture. It is therefore necessary, if we would understand them, to study the religion and life of Arabians and Babylonians, and also the religious and social life of the people of Palestine during the period they lived in the land as a nation from the conquest to the fall of Jerusalem.

Here again we can only direct the student instead of going into details. W. Robertson Smith, in his lectures on *The Religion of the Semites*, has placed all students under obligation, even while we cannot to-day accept all the conclusions worked out in that book and in the volume on *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*. Granting that scholars have proved certain conclusions wrong these works are well worthy of the closest study in that they furnish a background for the religious life of Israel. *The Religion of Israel* by Kuenen, in spite of its naturalistic tone, is still a standard work the student must study. One of the latest additions to the study of the subject is *The Religion of Israel* by Prof. H. P. Smith whose *Old Testament History* is indispensable when one seeks the background for the religious life. For the study of the religious life of Babylonia we have Sayce, Rogers and Jastrow, this latter scholar having recently given to the world a valuable work on *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*. It is perhaps needless to urge the student to study the many articles in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

These will suffice to show us the rise and progress of the religion of the Old Testament. We shall be enabled to trace that religion from its prehistoric beginnings on through the period of the conquest and its contact with the religions of Canaan, on through prophetism, until we come to the canonization of the literature of the Old Testament, and as we do we shall see, as Professor Kent has said, that "in the Israelites the diverse streams of divine revelation converged. The result is that, instead of many little rivulets, befouled by errors and superstitions, through their history there flowed a mighty stream, ever becoming broader and deeper and clearer as it received fresh contributions from the new fountains of purest revelation that opened in Hebrew soil."

While we shall find many things we did not expect to find, and while Israel borrowed more than we aforesaid thought, and while we shall be compelled to change many of the ideas in which we were reared regarding the course of Hebrew religion, yet at the same time, and as the result of this study, we shall see, as we could not see from the old way of looking at it, its divine element, and wherein it really differed from the surrounding religions. We shall see that the theories of the Pan-Babylonians are inadequate to account for the differences. No amount of study of comparative religion can account for the idea of Yahveh as held by the greatest of the prophets of Israel. It is in this conception of Yahveh that we must look for the difference between the religion of Israel and the religions of Babylonia, Assyria, Canaan, and in fact all the surrounding peoples. "Even though they are not the discoverers of the unity and the moral character of God, still it was they who brought them out from their obscurity and gave them a content which previous to this had only been dim and uncertainly felt, more surmised than clearly conceived. They established clearly and completely the moral side of God's nature, and, taking this as a standpoint, they explained everything which happened in the world in accordance with this conception, and thereby exalted the uncertain imperfect idea of God current in their days to the idea of a universal moral monotheism which governs the whole world."

We do not ask after the origin of the name or the idea of Yahveh. That it is older than Israel is evident. Not the origin, but the final conception is the main concern with us at this time. As Prof. W. R. Rogers says: "At first sight this may seem like a startling robbery of Israel, this taking away from her the divine name 'Yahveh' as an exclusive possession, but it is not so. Yahveh himself is not taken away: he remains the priceless possession, the

chief glory of Israel. It is only the name that is shown to be widespread. And the name matters little. The great question is, What does this name convey? What is the theological content? The name came to Israel from the outside; but into that vessel a long line of prophets from Moses onward poured such a flood of attributes as never a priest in all western Asia from Babylonia to the sea ever dreamed of in his highest moments of spiritual insight. In this name and through Israel's history God chose to reveal himself to Israel, and by Israel to the world. Therein lies the supreme and lonesome superiority of Israel over Babylonia."

We do not seek to belittle the other religions of the world, neither do we seek to put the religion of Israel in a place apart because of prejudice. But a strict investigation will compel the student to hold apart what, by their very nature, are naturally apart. Lack of time and space forbids any detailed discussion.

Passing to the New Testament we reach a place where many would forbid us to compare. Is not the religion of the New Testament entirely distinct from every other form of religion the world has ever seen? Is it not a sign of irreverence to take it up in a scientific spirit and examine it? Is not the fact that the religion of the New Testament is the outcome of the teaching of Jesus fact enough to place it where men have no right to bring it down to the laboratory?

Such has been the attitude of the church, but it must go. Christianity is a historical religion which came into the world at a certain time and under certain conditions, and we have a right to examine it in the light of those conditions. When we so examine it there is nothing to fear. Christianity will bear the fullest investigation. We know more of the conditions under which it arose than at any other time in the history of the church. The researches of Mommsen, Harnack, Wernle, Ramsay and Deissmann, not to mention other great scholars, have given us back the world of the New Testament. We know now what influences were brought to bear on that new faith. We know the conditions out of which it came and into which it went.

Particularly must the student of the epistles of Paul get thoroughly acquainted with the mystery religions of that day if he would understand Paul. Only as we understand the meaning of Osiris, Attis, Adonis, Mithra and the other saviour-gods shall we be able to get at the heart of the teaching of Paul and his school. While he was a Jew, a Hebrew son of Hebrew parents, yet he was reared in an atmosphere purely Hellenistic where his "whole idea of re-

demption has been unconsciously universalized, individualized, and spiritualized, by contact with Greek and Hellenistic thought."

We recognize that there is a danger here, as in other new studies, of being carried away because of the novelty of the subject, but at the same time we have to widen our outlook if we would become master-teachers to our intellectually restless age. In the words of one of the keenest of New Testament students: "Whether Paul himself so conceived it or not, the Gentile world had no other moulds of thought wherein to formulate such a Christology than the current myths of redeemer-gods. The value of the individual soul had at last been discovered, and men resorted to the ancient personifications of the forces of nature as deliverers of this new-found soul from its weakness and mortality. The influential religions of the time were those of personal redemption by mystic union with a dying and resurrected saviour-god, an Osiris, an Adonis, an Attis, a Mithra. Religions of this type were everywhere displacing the old national faiths."

We can only call the attention of the student to this field which is so rich in promise, and ask him to take up the study of it as it is to-day. This he can do with Deissmann, Gardner, Farnell, Kennedy, Fowler and others as his teachers.

Neither can the student neglect the study of the apocalyptic literature. Many of the dark places of the New Testament are made bright in the light of these strange works. The eschatological question is at present the burning question in New Testament study. Here again great care is necessary, for theories are given out, only too often, as assured facts. What did Jesus mean when he used the title "Son of Man"? What did he mean by the "kingdom of God"? Was his gospel preached under the influence of the apocalyptic ideas of his day, or did he wholly escape their influence? If he did, what must we think of the eschatological material to be found in the gospel story? These are some of the questions we have to answer to-day. A good book is *The Eschatology of the Gospels* by Dobschutz. Schweitzer's volume on *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* demands serious attention at this point. It is almost needless to add that Dr. Charles is the great authority when we come to the study of the apocalypses.

We have had many wild theories retailed as sober, scientific fact here as in other fields of research. We cannot accept the conclusions of a work so great as Frazer's *Golden Bough* without exercising the greatest care. Whatever we may think of the main contentions of the parts already published of this work we cannot

but state that the author's evidence is, in many places, so forced as to lose its usefulness for science. He often writes as if the mere accumulation of details from all the corners of the earth and from all ages were evidence.

How to characterize such a work as Robertson's *Pagan Christs* we scarcely know. We would like to believe the writer was serious in his work, but the evidences are too many that almost anything will do if only it has the slightest resemblance to some gospel story. On both the above mentioned works it is well to remember what a recent scholar has said regarding comparative religion: "Comparison that confines itself to counting up resemblances here and there will be of small value. We cannot comprehend the real meaning of a single religious rite, a single sentence of any scripture, apart from the context to which it belongs. Acts and words alike issue out of experiences that may be hundreds of years old, and sum up generations, it may be whole ages, of continuous progress."

Remember that we cannot afford to turn from any branch of study just because some enthusiasts carry it to extremes. All abuses must give way before the greater enlightenment. Comparative religion is a fruitful field for study, and we are pleased to know that more than one educational institution is taking it up thoroughly among their courses.

As we read the legends of the creation, deluge, etc., on the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia, or read the code of Hammurabi, or read the psalms and prayers of the ancient Babylonians, and the ideas of the Egyptians regarding Osiris and the other life, we at once see that we have a ground for comparing these with the Old and New Testament stories. As we watch the spread of the religions of the Orient through the Roman empire prior to and at the time of the rise of Christianity, and as we note the main conceptions in these religions, we again see what ground the student has for comparison. Here the works of Franz Cumont will be found helpful.

This is but a very brief outline of this vast subject. Our Bible is a new book for this generation as for no other. If some theories have been exploded as the result of the new light, the Bible itself has gained in value for the race. Many a part considered unprofitable has been seen to hold a living message. We can more than ever see that "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teachings, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." We must not blame the men

of a former age for the theories they held. "We live in a light that they did not possess, but which it has pleased the providence of God to shed around us; and if the Bible is to retain its authority and influence amongst us, it must be read in this light, and our beliefs about it must be readjusted and accomodated accordingly. To utilize, so far as we can, the light in which we live is, it must be remembered, not a privilege only, but a duty."

Poor indeed is he who has not come into the light of this great age. As we said before, there never has been so much light for the Bible-student as in this particular age. We have a glorious opportunity of making the Bible live again to the men and women of this age if we will exert ourselves. It is not necessary to furnish a bibliography since we have named so many works in the text. If the student will but procure these, or study them, and will work at them consistently, we know that he will be, in very deed, "a workman, not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." If we can lead but one soul out of the comfortable but suffocating prison-house of the received dogma into the open air of the true revelation, we shall not have studied in vain. The world is ready for the light to break. To withhold that light is criminal, even sinful. To us has been committed a great trust, and it is for us to be wise money-changers.

Ours is the greatest of the scriptures of the world. In it we have a treasure beyond price. At the same time, however, we must be willing to take the light we can gather from others. We must ever remember

"God is not dumb that He should speak no more.
 If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness,
 And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor:
 There stands the mountain of the Voice no less.

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
 And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
 Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
 Texts of despair or hope, or joy or moan.
 While swings the sea, while mists the mountain shroud,
 While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
 Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."

Let us be bold enough to claim what we can and, taking the treasure given to us by the past and the present, teach the world whenever we can the truths that will lift it to the heights it is meant to attain.