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I. LITERARY.

MOSES.

No man among the sages
Enrolled on history's pages
To challenge all the ages
To reverence or condemn,
Can hold compare with Moses ;
No other name discloses,
No other life exposes
Such grandeur as reposes
In that God-crowned king of men.

No page in human history—
Sacred or profane,
No myth of heathen mystery,
No saga of the Dane,
No vague or weird tradition,
From all the hoary past,
Of man, or woman's mission
In labors great and vast
Suggest such scenes of splendor,
Of wonder and amaze,
To thrill the heart and render
One mortal's life ablaze,
As track the Hebrew Prophet,
In paths of lurid light,
From burning bush of Midian
To Pisgah's lonely height.

As Prophet and Preacher
And humanity's teacher,
The Koran's inspirer
Before the Hegira

FRESH LIGHT FOR BIBLE STUDENTS.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

The enterprise of the nineteenth century has given an unprecedented impulse to the study of oriental archæology. The discovery of the Rosetta Stone, unlocking the treasures of the Egyptian hieroglyphics; the resurrection of the buried cities of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, and the decipherment of their disintombed tablets; the rehabilitation of the lost empire of the Hittites, and the disclosure of its real influence upon the course of human affairs; the discovery of the Moabite Stone, the Siloam Inscription, or the Tablet of the Temple Court—any one of these achievements, not to mention a dozen others scarcely less notable, would have given our age a conspicuous place in the history of archæological investigation. Taken together they constitute a distinction that is absolutely unique.

Before these discoveries were made, our only sources of information concerning the great peoples of antiquity were the meagre accounts given by the Bible and the contradictory narratives of two or three very questionable Greek historians, such as Herodotus and Berosus. The recovery of these hoary records in clay and stone dissipated this haze of uncertainty which for more than two thousand years had enveloped the ancient history of the orient. These exhumed chronicles, however, not only gave the secular annalist authentic data for a clear and connected history of the mighty empires which were successively dominant in the East, but also afforded a contemporaneous commentary on the Old Testament Scriptures, vindicating the historical credibility of the Jewish records concerning the growth, development and decay of their own national life, as well as demonstrating the connection between the Mosaic account of the ante-diluvian world and the beliefs embedded in the universal traditions of the race. "The same spirit of skepticism which had rejected the early legends of Greece and Rome had laid its hands on the Old Testament and had determined that the sacred histories themselves were but a collection of myths and fables. But suddenly, as with the wand of a magician, the ancient eastern world has been reawakened to life by the spade of the explorer and the patient

skill of the decipherer, and we now find ourselves in the presence of monuments which bear the names and recount the deeds of the heroes of Scripture," and which give accounts also of such great subjects as the Creation, the Sabbath, and the Deluge, dating from a time long prior to that of Moses.

The difference of spirit, however, between these distorted and polytheistic traditions and the pure and lofty monotheism of the parallel Hebrew scriptures, grounds an argument for the divine origin of the Bible which is stronger even than the one based upon the striking confirmations, furnished by the monuments, of the truth of the Scriptural statements concerning contemporary history.

But Apologetics is not the only branch of Biblical learning that receives benefit from these mines of archæology. The higher critic, eager to determine the question of the composite structure of the Pentateuch finds in the unearthed literature of Assyria incontrovertible proofs that the author of Genesis made use of previously existing documents or at least current traditions in his history of the world before the flood, cleansed however and separated from all error by the guiding Spirit under whose inspiration he wrote. On the other hand, the records of Egypt create the strongest probability that this author was no other than Moses. As, Mr. R. S. Poole says, these Egyptian documents emphatically call for a reconsideration of the whole question of the date of the Pentateuch, for they demonstrate that the history of the Exodus could not have been written by any one who was not contemporary with the events.

Nor are the apologist and the critic the only interested parties. For no class of scholars have the disinterred cities, palaces and libraries of Assyria a greater interest than for the philologist. Since the curious wedge-shaped characters have been deciphered and the once mysterious language reduced to a system, it is found to be the most important member of the great Semitic family, excepting only the Arabic and the Hebrew, and is moreover more closely related than any other to the Hebrew. So that here we find the long desired light upon rare or obscure Hebrew words and idioms that the other Semitic languages failed to supply.

Preachers, too, and other expounders of Scripture find here a priceless store of illustrative material that was absolutely

unknown half a century ago, and is still practically unknown to the majority of ministers. The results of recent archaeological research have belonged hitherto almost exclusively to scholars who have made them the subject of special study. Only a few attempts have been made to state these results in a way that would entertain and instruct people who are not specialists. The UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE proposes to do what it can towards supplying this defect in our Biblical literature by publishing a series of popular articles on this subject, written not for technical scholars but for general readers, and dealing with all the more important results of this new science of old things.

It will be our purpose in the early numbers of this series to give a brief history of the discoveries and excavations that have so marvelously stimulated archaeological study in our day, describe the character and contents of the Egyptian, Syrian and Assyrian inscriptions, relate the story of their decipherment, and then proceed to examine important passages of Scripture in the light of the testimony of these venerable and unimpeachable witnesses.