

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

ARTICLE I.

THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF ARCHÆOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES,¹

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ONE of the members of the Board of Managers of Xenia Theological Seminary said to me a few months ago, "Just what are you trying to do in your department in the Seminary?" Of course the question was asked jocosely and in a bantering way, and it was received and answered in the same kindly spirit. Nevertheless, that jest voiced a real question: there is in these days a widespread desire, and an imperative need as well, that the people should be made to know exactly what Theological Seminaries are "trying to do." The one thing I am going to do in this Inaugural Address is to gratify that desire and satisfy that need concerning the Department in Xenia Theological Seminary to which I have been elected, The Newburg Research Chair of Biblical Theology and Biblical Archæology.

Biblical Theology is a vague name with a various meaning. It is supposed to have been intended to differentiate this Department of Seminary work from the Department of Systematic Theology. But Systematic Theology is also Biblical,

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— sometimes: at least, it is at Xenia and at the other Theological Seminaries represented here on this occasion. The term “Biblical Theology” is actually made to cover everything from the simplest, most superficial book-study to the most radical of modern critical theories and the whole medley of speculative vagaries in matters Biblical. It is impossible to find one definition that will suit Biblical Theology everywhere. As to the definition of Biblical Archæology, perhaps it may justly be said that it is the right of Xenia to make a definition, for this was the first Theological Seminary in America to give distinct recognition to the new science of Biblical Archæology as a separate Department of Seminary work. This was done in the establishment of the Research Lectureship of Biblical Archæology which I have had the honor to occupy since 1908.

Now, coming to exact definitions, Biblical Theology in this Seminary is the Bible itself at its face value as a finished product, the progress of doctrine throughout the course of revelation in its chronological order. Of course, in observing chronological order, it is impossible to keep clear of literary questions; but the discussion of those questions belongs, at Xenia, to other Departments of the Seminary. In Biblical Theology the traditional view of the order of the books of the Bible, not because it is traditional, but because it is the order held by the great body of the scholarship of the Church in all ages and at the present time, is accepted as a working hypothesis to be tested by the whole course of the investigation which is the work of this Department. Biblical Archæology may be very simply defined as the light from archæological discovery in Bible lands.

Thus “just what I am trying to do in this Department” is

to set the Bible in the light of Archæological discovery and *understand it thus.*

The task thus set before us calls for very special attention to the outstanding characteristics of the Bible as a finished product, and the way in which these characteristics appear in the light of archæological discovery; especially, among all the characteristics of the Bible, Its Unity of Message, Its Claim to Exclusiveness in True Religion, and Its Missionary Propaganda.

I. Let us consider the Unity of Message in the Bible, to see how it appears in the light of archæological discovery.

The unity of message in the Bible, its ostensible intent as a finished product, its face value, is the *revelation of God saving a lost world.* In the Patriarchal Period, the revelation was only Revelation *in Promise*, a lifting up of the eyes of the world in hope. The bow set in the cloud, at the second beginning of the world, not only revealed God's purpose concerning this earth to the end of time, but also revealed God in his gracious attitude toward this world. Human life would have clouds, but God would set a bow of hope in every cloud, for the revelation of the promise of redemption was the Bow in the clouds of this world of sin.

In the Tribal Period revelation was in *startling providences.* It began in the revelation of God as the Light of the world, that would lighten but not consume, was followed by God's proving himself, his being and his supremacy and his saving mercy, in the judgments upon Egypt, and then was carried to completion in the startling course of divine providences on the way to Canaan. Here on this journey we have inspired history as well as an inspired record of history, and this history furnishes illustrations of life and of Christian living.

Here is a piece of history in which, from beginning to end, in regular order, each important step in the progress of grace in a soul and in the saving of a lost world is illustrated. Conversion, deliverance from the bondage of sin, is illustrated at the deliverance from Egyptian bondage at the Red Sea; daily grace, in the daily supplies for the wilderness journey; special help at times of need, in the deliverance through prayer at Rephidim; the Law for a rule of life, from the summit of Sinai: with all the arrangements for access to God and fellowship with him in the tabernacle and its ceremonial at the base of the Mount; divine leadership through the long wilderness journey and the successful entrance into the promised land at the end.

In the National Period of Israel's history, we have revelation *through Prophecy*, under judges and under kings, by statesmen, by prophets, by philosophers, by Psalmists, all of these and all the time, speaking for God, unfolding and enforcing that revelation of himself that had been made in the providences and the symbols of the wilderness journey and the tabernacle institutions, the spirit of prophecy ever growing more and more manifest and its message more glorious with the light of the coming sunrise of the Hope.

At last, revelation culminated in the Gospel Period in the revelation of God *in Person*, when the Son of man and the Son of God combined in one to be the promised Messiah of the prophets, the fulfillment of all the symbols of revelation in the providences and institutions of the wilderness and the full-blown opening of that bud of promise given to the patriarchs.

In the Apostolic Period, revelation was brought to a close in revelation *through Preaching*, recorded in Gospels, Epistles,

and Apocalypse; the beginning of that work for which was given the Great Commission.

Thus all the revelations made at various periods, "at sundry times and in divers manners," was but one revelation blending together in one complete unity. Revelation *in Person* was but the fulfillment of revelation *in Providence* in the wilderness journey, and the theme of revelation *through Preaching* from apostolic days to the end of the world. Revelation *through Prophecy* during the great national glory and national decline of Israel was but the enforcement of revelation *in the providences* and the symbolical institutions in the wilderness, the attempt to get the people to obey the law and to enter into the fellowship revealed at Sinai. And revelation *in Providence* in the wilderness was but the unfolding of revelation *in Promise* made to the Patriarchs. Thus always and everywhere, the one manifest intent of God, in Promise, in Providence, through Prophecy, in Person and through Preaching is the REVELATION OF GOD SAVING A LOST WORLD. The bow that spans the arch of heaven makes resplendent the day or the night with many hues that all blend together into one great beam of white light. So the bow of hope for this lost world displays the varied hues of these multiplied revelations, but all blend together into the white light of the love that "so loved the world," and finds its ultimate expression in the words of the institution of the sacrament, "my body broken for you," "my blood shed for the remission of the sins of many."

Now this unity of message in the Bible has become a vital question in modern Biblical research. If the unity of message be broken at any point along the line, it is then a broken unity, i.e. no longer a unity at all. The unity of truth is like the unity of an egg; if it be broken anywhere, it is no longer

an egg,—nor the truth. Revelation in Person is inseparately bound up by that Person, and still more by his apostles, with revelation in the providences and symbols of the wilderness, which had been promised to the Patriarchs and which was afterward enforced by the prophets and preached by the preachers. What word is so often on the lips of the Master as, “It is written”? or comes from the pen of the evangelist as, “that it might be fulfilled”? The apostles continually represent the one who “became flesh and tabernacled among us” as but the fulfillment of the things revealed in symbol at the tabernacle in the wilderness: and more especially the Epistle to the Hebrews is incomparably the greatest commentary ever written upon the meaning of the sacrificial ceremonial, representing Christ as but the antitype of the types and shadows contained in the sacrificial ritual. If, then, we take away either revelation in Person or revelation in Providence in the wilderness, the whole fabric of revelation falls. Impair the Gospels, and the types and shadows remain shadows *only*. Impair the types, and the antitype, who inseparably joined himself with the types, becomes a delusion and a self-deluded one, pretending to be the fulfillment of things that never existed.

It is equally necessary to believe in the early revelation of the promise of hope for the world, in order to believe in the later revelation of that hope in Person. If that early revelation be destroyed, then we must revise the great Gospel promise to read, “God so loved the world from Moses onward.” But who could believe that God “so loved the world” from Moses onward, and yet allowed the first half of the world he “so loved” to pass by without the slightest intimation of that love? Without the patriarchal revelation, this revelation is no revelation at all, but the story of a God of contradictions.

Finally here, revelation in Providence and revelation in Person equally need to be followed by the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Apocalypse. For, if revelation is not to become life, then it is no more than myth.

Thus the unity of the message must come from the beginning of the revelation and go on to the end. The logic of modern Biblical criticism is, at this point, certainly correct: if the trustworthiness of the message be impugned in any one of these great periods of revelation, the unity of message will no longer exist, and the Book become as *one* of the sacred books of the world.

We may gladly accept this challenge of criticism, and assert that the unity of message of the Bible has not been broken. In the light of archæological discovery it all still stands from the patriarchs of old to the Apostles in their world-wide missionary propaganda. Only a few out of the multitude of illustrations can here be cited, but they will be sufficient to indicate the character of the evidence.

The Patriarchal revelation recorded in Genesis still stands. The development of civilization in the earliest period of the world, recorded in the fourth chapter of Genesis, simple as it is, is yet complete and scientific in its order. The mention of the various steps of progress are exactly in the order of natural development: first shepherding; then agriculture; then, when population is large enough to constitute a public, the introduction of public religion and civil government; afterwards emigration, as population increases and needs more room; then the growth of cities and towns; and then strictly nomadic life, for people never begin to wander from place to place until there are peopled places to wander from and to wander to. After all this we have the development of industries and

crafts; and, last of all, of arts. Thus, brief as is this record, it is a scientific account of the earliest rise of civilization.

The Noachian deluge has been clearly and conclusively identified with the close of the ice age in the Northern Hemisphere by the life work of Professor G. Frederick Wright; and, what is still more, established to have been at a time consistent with the chronological statements of the Bible.

The Table of Nations in the tenth chapter of Genesis is the oldest geography in the world, and it is correct; though it is not wholly geography, but includes the various ideas distinguished by the modern technical terms, genealogy, geography, ethnology, and ethnography, all here grouped together. Nearly every name and place and people in this list has been identified. In the words of Kautzsch, one of the greatest of critical writers, "The so-called table of nations remains, according to all the results of monumental research, an ethnographic original document of the first rank, which nothing can replace."

The eastward movement of Semitic peoples, when "they journeyed east and found a plain in the land of Shinar," has been well established by the brilliant work of Professor Clay. Though some scholars reject his conclusion, his work in confirmation of the Biblical record is being ever more widely approved, and is thus overturning the view of the source and course of Semitic culture and emigration held by all kinds of critics for fifty years past.

Then the westward emigration of Semitic peoples in the days of Abraham and the events and implications of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis are now well corroborated, and the general immigration movement a well-established fact for the Amorite country of Palestine, and now even for the eastern

portion of Asia Minor, through the work of Professor Sayce, Professor Macalister, Père Vincent, and many others.

The turning of the Patriarchs to Egypt for succor in time of famine, and their cordial, even royal, reception there, has been corroborated and explained and justified by the startling discoveries of Professor Petrie in his excavations at the Hyksos' camps at Tell el-Yehudiyeh and Heliopolis. Likewise the slavery days in Egypt and the Hebrew sojourn there have been abundantly confirmed by Hebrew words in the Egyptian language of that period and Egyptian words in the Pentateuch.

These instances of the results of archæological research afford but a brief outline of the evidence bearing upon those times, but they are sufficient to illustrate the character of the evidence that shows that the Patriarchal record is trustworthy and will stand.

Let us turn to note next how the startling providences recorded in connection with the Tribal Period fit exactly into the history of the times. The prophecy of four hundred years for Israel in Egypt is well paralleled by the Egyptian tablet of four hundred years erected for Rameses the Great, representing the Hyksos king Nubti near to the time of the Hebrew Joseph at one end of the line and the great Oppressor, Rameses the Great, contemporary of Moses the great Deliverer, at the other end of the line. It has long been the hope of Egyptologists to find some mention of Moses in the Egyptian inscriptions, and the abiding regret that none has certainly been found. Different Egyptologists at various times have thought to see some mention of Moses in this same tablet of four hundred years, but the identification yet lacks corroboration and in the opinion of some is made impossible, or, at least, very improbable, by the laws of Egyptian syntax.

The Egyptian equivalent of the name Moses is very frequent at the time of the Exodus, in combination with the name of an Egyptian god, as Moses' name would almost certainly be while he was a resident at the Egyptian Court. That among the hundreds of instances in which the name Moses occurs in the inscriptions, as Ramoses, Thothmoses, Ahmoses, there may be some mention of the Moses of the Bible is quite possible, but we must wait for corroborative evidence before positively identifying him in this inscription or any other.

The exact order and timing of the Plagues is confirmed by that natural round of Egyptian experiences, even to this day, which were the embodiment of the miraculous dealings of God with the Egyptians. And every point in the story of the insurrection is written upon the ruins at Pithom, despite all attempts to discredit the discoveries of Naville there. I have carefully examined the results of his work on the ground and have found every item of it correct. I would be glad to go over the ruins with any one who is skeptical concerning those discoveries. The place was called "Pithom"; it was a "store city"; the bricks were laid in "mortar," contrary to the usual Egyptian method of brick work; the bricks in the lower courses were well filled with good clean straw, those of the middle courses were made with stubble mixed with weeds and all pulled up by the roots, while the bricks of the upper courses were made of Nile mud without the admixture of any binding material whatever: and all these things are to be found in the ancient region of "Succoth," as the Bible asserts.

On one occasion, when about to go into the Desert of Sinai, I asked one familiar with the region to suggest the best guidebook for the journey, "would I best get the German work, Baedeker?" "No," said he, though himself a German, "The Book of Exodus is the best guidebook for the

Sinai journey." And I found it so. Every important point is found in exactly the right order and at the right distance. People far away may speculate learnedly about the identification of the region and the comparative merits of this or that proposed route, but I have never known any one who went over this route with the Book of Exodus in hand who was not convinced that this is the way that Israel came.

The Israel tablet found by Professor Petrie harmonizes best with the facts of history otherwise known, when it is recognized that the fifth year of Merenptah mentioned in the tablet was also the fifth year of the leadership of Moses, as recorded in the Pentateuch: one year after the death of the king that sought Moses' life, for Moses to settle up his affairs in Midian and return to Egypt; one year for the Plagues, as clearly indicated in the Biblical record and the round of natural events that embodied the plagues; two years for the journey through the wilderness and the sojourn at Sinai until Israel was turned back at Kadesh-barnea, at the beginning of the fifth year. Thus the poetic announcement of the inscription of Merenptah, "Israel is ruined, her seed is not; Palestine is become as the widows of Egypt," is the proud boast of the Pharaoh that Israel had failed to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea, because of the weakening of the strength of the nation by the destroying of the boy babies, in the diabolical Egyptian scheme to make Israel characteristically a nation of women.

The Messianic hope already in Israel in the Patriarchal Period, grown greater and embodied in a great system of sacrifices and symbols in the Tribal Period in the wilderness, reached its highest and most glorious development in the Prophetic Period ever brightening to the end. This Messianic hope in all its glory was not in the least incredible for that

period, and not exclusive nor even entirely unique in Israel. It was in the ancient world before the days of a chosen people, as the Bible represents, and continued on down along all lines of migration to appear in various distorted, grotesque, forms in the myths of the nations. This has long been manifest in mythology, and has received renewed confirmation through the brilliant work of Professor Langdon in his decipherment of the tablets of the Nippur library in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, tablets that come from the time of the Sumerians between the time of Noah and the days of Abraham.

Thus when the Messiah did come, the Son of God, and claimed to fulfill the great revelation made in providence in the days of Moses, and when the prophets unfolded that revelation made in the wilderness, and the apostles preached the gospel announced by the Messiah as a revelation from God, *they were not mistaken, neither He nor they.*

So firmly is the revelation of the New Testament period entrenched in history, and so little has its position ever been really disturbed by adverse criticism, that it is unnecessary to follow this line of illustrations from archæological discoveries throughout that period. It will be sufficient to give, in conclusion of the Old Testament Period and for all the Christian Period following, the reply which I recently heard made by Professor Sayce to an inquiry concerning the tendency of recent archæological discovery. Said the distinguished Oxford Professor, "Since the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna tablets, there have been many great discoveries in the field of Biblical archæology, every one of which confirms the traditional views of Scripture, and most of which are dead against the current critical views."

Thus archæological research has confirmed every great

period and portion of revelation, and its unity of message stands unbroken in the light of archæological discovery.

II. We turn now to consider the Claim of the Bible to Exclusiveness in True Religion in the light of archæological discovery. The claim of the Bible is that there is none other way of salvation than that which it presents. In the name of Comparative Religion, the claim is set up that the Bible presents but one of many ways of salvation, or as comparative religion would phrase it, of a correct and satisfactory religiousness. Can the Bible's claim to exclusiveness be sustained? Have we *the* Bible? or *a* Bible?

Let us see what supports the Biblical claim to exclusiveness. First of all, there is the *wholeness* of the Bible, its completeness. All the discoveries that sustain the unity of message of the Bible sustain also its completeness and symmetry. No such completeness and symmetry is found in other religions, especially not in those of Bible lands, though little more completeness is found in any religion of any age or land.

No one understands the Egyptian religion; it is exceedingly doubtful if ever the Egyptians themselves understood it, or attempted to systemize it. The religions of Assyria and Babylonia, similar to each other in many respects, and in some things similar to the Egyptian religion, though with different mythological names, were not much clearer, and were utterly lacking in that symmetry which only completeness can give. An Egyptian or Babylonian systematic theology seems utterly impossible at this time, and does not seem ever to have been attempted by the Egyptians or the Babylonians. Some attempts toward systematic presentation of these ancient religions have recently been made, but have not

been notably successful. Most of those who have written upon these religions have frankly confessed their inability to systematize them, and have rested content with presenting those salient points which can be discerned, whether consistent with each other or not. Others would have done better, if they had done the same. Whenever more than this has been attempted, the attempt has been a failure. In my younger student days I dipped a little into the study of philosophy. I recall especially the study of the philosophy of Descartes and of the learned commentators upon Descartes. It was far easier to understand the simple, straightforward, discussions of the philosopher than the explanations (!) of the commentaries upon his philosophy. Difficult as is the Egyptian religion, it is easier to try to understand its own statements, than some of the attempts to make a systematic theology out of it.

The religions of the Greeks and of the Romans were also mythological medleys, the pantheon in each case composed of sinful capricious men and women projected upon the skies. The same lack of completeness in large measure characterizes Mohammedanism and its modern counterpart, Mormonism, though the copious extracts made from the Old Testament in the holy books of each do much to clarify the atmosphere. The religions of the Farther East and of the Far East, especially those of the Indo-European races, present something more of a certain philosophical clearness, yet with much lack of completeness. Especially, not one of them has a saviour or makes any suggestion for adequate provision for help from without, the greatest need of the human soul.

But this claim of the Bible to exclusiveness in true religion is sustained not only by the *wholeness*, but by the *holiness*, of the Bible, as seen in the comparisons presented by

archæological research. Etymologically, holiness is simply wholeness; in the reality of usage, holiness is wholeness and *something more*, an added element of high moral character. I recall to mind that one of the most eloquent messages of the distinguished Dr. William G. Moorehead, formerly President of this Theological Seminary, was that the moral glory of the Living Word was the final attestation of his claims. It is no less true that it is the moral glory of the written Word which gives final attestation to its claims of divinity. Other so-called "bibles" of various religions of the world lack this moral glory. The Egyptian Book of the Dead and the incantations and hymns of the Babylonians are, for the most part, very stupid reading for one who seeks uplifting and purifying thoughts. They seldom give any intellectual uplift and rarely or never any spiritual impulse. They appeal for the most part to low and even despicable motives. These religions did not save from sin: they did not claim to do so: they were, instead, themselves full of vileness. With the single exception of the hymns and prayers of Nebuchadnezzar, there is little or nothing even to give rise to a comparison with the religious sentiments of the Bible. These hymns and prayers do breathe much of the sentiment of the Psalmists and the prophets; but these productions come from that period of Babylonian history when the influence of Ezekiel and Daniel was abroad in the land, and the example of pious Jews in exile was before the Babylonians, and Daniel himself was high in the councils of the court.

That great truths are here and there to be found in the ancient religions of Bible lands and in many other religions of earth, is not to be denied. There is no occasion to deny it; the Bible does not claim to be the only repository of truth, but only to present the *only* way. The Bible, because of

its completeness and its high moral character, its wholeness and its holiness, is justified in its claims to exclusiveness in true religion. The others, ancient or modern, are, at best, but planets, reflecting a little of the light of revelation in the world, either that which is drawn from the Word itself or that which has descended from the early revelation to all the world: the Bible is a sun and center of such divine light.

III. The consideration of the Missionary Propaganda of the Bible in the light of modern research will transcend somewhat, in its discussion, the province of archæological discovery. The Bible calls upon those who receive it to make its truth known to the world. It is asserted to-day in the name of Comparative Religion that this is wholly unnecessary. Is the missionary propaganda of the Bible revelation, as it claims for itself, or is it mere presumption, as is more than hinted by many students of Comparative Religion?

There are three periods in the history of redemption, as recorded in the Bible. There was, at the first, a period when the revelation of redemption for the world was to all the world without discrimination. It was so in antediluvian time, and in postdiluvian time down to the days of Abraham. A portion of the world may have neglected and lost that revelation, but there was no chosen people.

Then there came a time when a wall of partition was set up. A people was chosen with whom revelation was deposited, though the prophets in their Messianic vision continually looked over the wall of partition to all the world. The revelation that had been made was not withdrawn, and we have no knowledge that anything was ever added to it, except that an occasional missionary prophet, as Jonah, gave a message to others than the chosen people.

At last there came another time when the wall of partition was broken down and a great missionary propaganda was declared, that the revelation might be given again to all the world.

The Bible occupies itself almost exclusively with the period within the wall of partition. Only a few pages are devoted to the long period before Abraham, and the record stops short after the beginning of the missionary propaganda of Gospel days. Now the mooted question is this, Is the missionary propaganda and program for these concluding days, the days in which we live and the days following to the end of the world, *justified*? Is the record of this propaganda *revelation*, as Christians believe, or is it *presumption*, as the religions of the present-day world, seconded by many students of Comparative Religion, assert? Has the message of that early period, when revelation was to all the world, passed clear around the middle period, when there was the middle wall of partition, and left in the religions of the world to-day sufficient light? or have they of themselves received or produced sufficient light? not to mention the claims of some who think that no salvation is needed anywhere in any case. The practical question confronting Christianity to-day, because of the vigorous assertion of irreligion and heathen religions, is this, Is Christianity imperial or only provincial? Has it a world-wide mission, or are the religions of the world good enough for the peoples who have them, and better, indeed, for the people that have them than imported Christianity?

Traces of early revelation may be found in ancient religions, perhaps, even in modern religions in heathen lands. Professor Langdon has shown, as already noticed, that the ancient Sumerians had what certainly looks most startlingly like the Messianic hope, just such as might have come down from

the antediluvian times. We are certainly not to suppose that Noah was the only preacher of righteousness in that early age, but only the last and greatest one. Equally clear and startling are the Messianic hopes of the ancient Egyptians. Professor Breasted is certainly justified in the view that the perfect Kingdom of Ipuwer is the Messianic hope, while the resemblances between the Osiris myth and the Messianic vision seem to many entirely too circumstantial to be merely accident. Even the myths, the legends, and the poetry of the Greeks and Romans reflected some things that seem to be Messianic, and missionaries throughout the world sometimes meet with startling traditions and superstitions among the heathen peoples. But this is the utmost of such Messianic hopes. They are *not sufficient*. No company of the saved has ever arisen anywhere, *except where the Bible message has come*. The utmost possible influence of revelation found by missionaries in heathen lands to-day is the impetus to seek which sometimes brings men long distances to find the missionary and hear a message, which he hopes may satisfy his longing. Some years since I conducted a very wide investigation into the satisfactoriness of worship among the devotees of the world's religions. The unanimous testimony of highly educated missionaries was that the worshippers of the world's religions, except where the religion of the Bible has come, sit solitary; they meet no one in the closet. And they do not enjoy their religion or continue their devotions for the pleasure of them, or beyond the point at which they feel that they may safely stop.

Thus, not only does the testimony of archæological discoveries, but of modern missionary research in comparative religion as well, sustain the Biblical claim for its missionary propaganda, that "there is none other name under heaven

given among men whereby we must be saved"; "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Now that we have set the Bible in the light of archæological discovery, how does it appear?

Mohammedans of Bible lands are wont to say to Christians, with boastful sneer, "At our holy place we have bones to show, but you Christians have only an empty tomb at Jerusalem." Yes, thank God, an *empty* tomb, out of which the living Lord, and with him Christianity, came to stand in the light of the resurrection. Archæological discovery is a literary resurrection, and the Bible, the written Word, in the light of archæological discovery stands out in glory, as the living Word in the light of the resurrection.