

listen to Nonconformists, however worthy of respect and attention they may be.

The discussion on variations in a National Church ought to bear good fruit. When, after papers by the Bishop of Exeter, the Dean of Canterbury, the Bishop of Worcester, and Bishop Barry, a man occupying the position of Prebendary Webb-Peploe could say with evident conviction that they seemed to him to contain the germs of mutual agreement, there would seem a fresh ray of light amidst our confusions. The points urged by these speakers will need very careful consideration, but there is at least some sign of a common basis, and we can only hope that further consideration of the views put forward will lead to a still better mutual understanding.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "CHURCHMAN."

SIR,

Mr. Chadwick's references to Dr. Chalmers in your last issue recall to the memory a most noteworthy incident in the history of social progress. In his "Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns," Dr. Chalmers details at length the methods he pursued in dealing with pauperism at Glasgow, and their success. I read the book some time ago, and wondered why we had ceased to hear of this striking experiment. On asking some of my Scotch friends the reason, I was told that it collapsed entirely as soon as the guiding hand of Chalmers was withdrawn. No more remarkable instance could be given of the fact that the best methods will fail if not directed by superior intelligence and informed by the spirit of Christ.

Yours faithfully,

J. J. LIAS.

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## Notices of Books.

*Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century.* By H. V. HILPRECHT, with the co-operation of Drs. BENZINGER, HOMMEL, JENSEN, and STEINDORFF. Illustrated with nearly 200 woodcuts and photogravures, and four maps. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1903. Price 12s. 6d. net.

THIS book, so long expected and eagerly waited for, has not disappointed our expectations. As a record of recent research in Assyria and Babylonia it is unrivalled; nor, as a brief résumé of the surveys and explorations carried out by C. J. Rich, Sir R. K. Porter, Layard, Rawlinson, George Smith, and Rassam, could it well be surpassed. But students will have

cause to value it chiefly as a detailed account of the American excavations at Nuffar (Nippur), first under Peters and Haynes, and latterly under Professor Hilprecht himself, to whose scientific knowledge, skill, and industry are due the considerable advances made in our knowledge of the civilization of Mesopotamia during the third and second millenniums B.C. The mass of details given in the text of this book (pp. 289-568) has been marshalled with great lucidity, and the many excellent illustrations afford a valuable clue to the precise significance of the topographical facts related.

The Philadelphian expeditions—there have been three so far—have all been conducted at the cost of a number of public-spirited Americans, and each has contributed its share to the sum total of human knowledge on questions connected with Mesopotamia, its history and civilization. But it is to the third expedition—which began work in 1898—that scholars owe most, or, rather, will finally owe most, when the data acquired at Nuffar have been co-ordinated, digested, and interpreted. This third expedition was directed throughout by Professor Hilprecht; and the present book is to be regarded more as a preliminary statement of results than as an ordered body of scientific information.

Among other interesting "finds" recorded here may be named the discovery of a true arch, which disposes at once of the hitherto accepted teaching that it is to the Romans that the world owes this palmary advance in building methods. As a matter of fact, it is now beyond dispute that the principle of the arch was known in Babylonia some 6,000 years ago. The vaulted tunnel illustrated on p. 399 shows clearly that the Babylonian builders were perfectly conversant with the method of arching in bricks laid on the principle of radiating *voussoirs*. This is a discovery of prime significance in the history of architecture.

Another striking result of the expedition is the unearthing of the great "zigurrat" and temple of Bêl, erected when that god was the chief figure in the Babylonian or Sumerian pantheon, long previous to the days when Mardûk had become the chief deity of the Semitic civilization, subsequently superimposed on the ruins of the earlier cults. Besides these important discoveries is another—equal, if not more striking in its probable consequences—and that is the discovery of the great priestly library at Nuffar, which, after its cruel destruction by Elamite invaders, had lain unnoticed for over 4,000 years among the ruins and débris of the old city. However, even this has come to light, and the shelves of the library have yielded up their treasures.

A vast complex of interesting and important facts regarding the ancient art of Babylonia, its commercial relations with the rest of the world, its social status, its religion, and its material progress, awaits us as the result of Professor Hilprecht's labours, conducted as they have been with much tact, critical insight, and scientific mastery of the problems involved. We are, as a Bible-studying nation, deeply indebted to the author and publishers of this excellent work for what they have given us.