

The facts here brought forward give a new interest to exploration in Palestine and Syria, for they may enable us to determine many ancient monuments and works of art, as also to account for phenomena of population. With the help of the Biblical record they will give us a far better and safer view of comparative mythology, previous to the Aryan period, than we have yet obtained. What were chance conjectures of men of learning will, in many cases, be converted into ascertained facts. It is within compass that we may, in the countries referred to, find characters or inscriptions, far older than the Moabite, in a cuneiform letter and Caucaso-Tibetan language.

The statements here made already rest on the testimony of numerous facts, but they are so new that there has not been time for their full development. When the strangeness of them has passed away, and instead of looking for a Scythian language without the means of interpretation, we begin to avail ourselves of the neglected languages of the Caucasus, for which we have liberal materials, then the Bible, and the scenes of its events, will become of the greater interest and value in throwing a new and clear light on that obscure and remote epoch of the western world between three thousand and four thousand years ago, which has as yet wanted a history. In return the Bible will receive further and safer illustrations, in addition to those as yet obtained.

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#### LETTER FROM DR. CHAPLIN.\*

“A few days ago I received a visit from Herr Victor zur Helle, of Vienna, who informed me that he had been able to enter the hitherto unexplored southern passage of the 'Ain es-Shefa, and had followed it to its termination, 96ft. from its commencement. He had lost his compass in the water, and consequently could not be certain of the exact direction of the passage, but believed it to be south-west. As the water is seldom so low as to admit of an examination of this canal, and the winter rains, which are now anxiously looked for, may soon close it again, I took the earliest opportunity of descending, and the following are the notes of my observations:—

“The descent was made on the 29th of November, 1870. The passage commences at the southern end of the western wall of the basin. It runs 43ft. 6in. in a direction S. 84 W., 13ft. 5in. S. 80 W., 5ft. 4in. S. 1 W., 12ft. 6in. S. 65 W., and, lastly, 27ft. 6in. S. 4 E., its entire length being about 102ft. At its termination it is blocked up by fallen, or most irregularly constructed, masonry, and has no basin. A stick could be thrust in under the blocks of stone for about 3ft., but no continuation of the passage could be made out. The floor slopes towards each end, the highest part being about the middle. At the entrance,

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and for some 20ft. beyond, the water was a little over knee-deep; to the middle the passage was nearly dry, and at the further extremity the water reached 6 or 8in. above the knees. The canal is 4ft. high and 3ft. broad at the entrance, and of about the same dimensions throughout, except where narrowed by fallen masonry, or widened or made higher by the disappearance of the walls or roof. Only at one spot was there any difficulty in passing. The walls are of rough masonry, some of the stones being of large size. The roof, where perfect, is of thick broad blocks of limestone, laid across. No arches, columns, or ornamented stones were observed. The rock could not be detected anywhere, though it is possible that it may in some places form the floor. Plaster still covers portions of the sides and floor, but the passage is in a very ruinous condition. Water was observed trickling down from between the stones of the southern wall, at a spot not far from the entrance, and the sides and roof were in some places very wet, in others nearly dry. No appearance of a fountain was discovered, though carefully searched for.

“ Advantage was taken of the low state of the water to examine the basin somewhat more minutely than has (I believe) hitherto been possible. It was found to measure, from north to south, in the middle, 11ft. 9in. ; from east to west, in the middle, 6ft. 6in. ; from east to west, opposite the entrance to the lower passage, 5ft. 10in. The floor is of rock at the northern part; how far the rock extends to the south could not be ascertained in consequence of the depth of the water. The walls are everywhere of rough irregular masonry. Plaster still remains on the northern and southern sides; that on the latter being continuous with that of the lower passage. The plastered surface on the northern side extends farther to the east and west than the side walls which abut upon it. The plaster is made with small white stones, instead of the usual pounded pottery. Water was trickling in a rather copious stream from under the masonry on the east side of the northern passage at its termination, and it was observed that here the masonry rests upon plaster, from between which and the stones the water was running. Further north, also in this passage, the walls rest upon a plastered surface.

“ It can hardly, perhaps, be said that the mystery which has attached to this remarkable well is even now entirely removed; yet every fresh observation tends to confirm the opinion that *its water is derived solely from the percolation of the rains through the débris upon which the city is built*. There is no evidence to show that it proceeded originally from a subterranean source; and it is not likely that, if a fountain had existed here in ancient times, it could have escaped mention by either the sacred or profane writers. Probably there was formerly a pool near this situation, into which the water coming down the valley (which drains a large extent of surface) was carefully conducted. After the destruction of the city and the consequent filling up of the pool, the water would still find its way down to the same spot, and either well up

to the surface or be reached by means of a shaft. As the level of the city continued to rise, a longer shaft would be required, and thus in the course of ages what was at first a superficial collection of water would become converted into a deep well. "THO. CHAPLIN, M.D."

The following is an extract from Captain Wilson's "Notes on the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem":—

"The es-Shefa well supplies the Turkish baths in the old cotton market. From the bottom of the shaft a channel, cut in the rock, and vaulted with masonry, leads down in a southerly direction to a small cave or basin, from which the water is obtained in summer by a man who descends for the purpose. No leakage was visible at the sides of passage; but the greater portion of the water probably passes through the deep rubbish above, and thus acquires the peculiar Siloam flavour. The supply and quality cannot well be improved."—*Notes*, p. 85. Plate xxii.

## NOTES ON CERTAIN NEW DISCOVERIES AT JERUSALEM.

BY M. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

(1.) *Hebrew inscription in Phœnician characters.*—This inscription, discovered by myself several months ago, is the only monumental text which goes back to the time of the kings of Judah. It belongs authentically, by the very position which it occupies, to the history of Jerusalem. I cannot yet publicly point out its origin, in order not to interfere with the steps taken for its preservation. I will confine myself to saying that it has probably a religious signification, as is proved by the words *beit* and *Baal*, which are very distinctly to be read.

(2.) *Roman inscription.*—This text is the second which has been found up to the present date, belonging to the Roman occupation of Jerusalem—the first being the votive inscription of Antoninus, built into the southern wall of the Haram. It came to light in the demolition of an old building; unfortunately it is incomplete. We read only the following:—

LEG' X' FR'  
LIUS · SABINUS  
NA · PRINCEPS  
VSD · D · D'

It is a dedication made by a *centurio princeps* of the Tenth Legion (*fretensis*), named (Ju?) lius Sabinus, to another officer, probably superior in grade, belonging to the same legion, whose name is wanting. The interest of the text depends principally on the fact that the