

archaeological study and the statements of the Scripture.

It was easy to see that in the case of the natural sciences, the Bible makes no attempt to give us a complete presentation of them. The same fact is true in history, though it is not quite so obvious. The Bible does not attempt to give us a complete history of the universe, nor even a complete history of Israel. In fact, its primary purpose is not even to give a history at all. Its purpose is to tell of God's relationship to man and of the ways in which He revealed Himself to them, and the ways in which He prepared the way for the coming of His Son. All of this took place in the course of human events, and, consequently, the historical background is tremendously important for the understanding of the Bible. Yet, the Bible makes no attempt to give this historical background in full. In many point the history is stated; in others it is presupposed. Cultural features are not generally ~~fully~~ discussed or presented in the Bible, but merely referred to incidently where they are important to the background of the events. Any reconstruction of ancient history or ancient culture, on the basis of the Bible alone, must of necessity be incomplete, since the Bible does not have as its purpose the presentation of a complete account of these features. In fact, to give a complete account, either of the important events of the history of Israel or of the important features of the cultural life of the Israelites would require an entire encyclopedia, instead of a volume the size of the Old Testament.

Archaeology as we have noticed is the investigation of materials which have been preserved from ancient times and the attempt upon the basis of them to reconstruct the history and the culture of those times. Ordinarily, archaeology deals only with objects, such as remains of houses or other buildings, of furniture or articles of daily life, weapons, even bodies. In the study of the history of Greece and Rome, the greater part of our written material has been handed down in manuscript form and is considered as a part of classical literature rather than of the field of archaeology. In connection with most of the periods dealt with in the Old Testament, the greater part of the written material was either buried through the ages, or at least the knowledge ^{of the language} and meaning of the ~~writing~~ writing was lost for many centuries. These things have been rediscovered in modern times and, consequently, in dealing with them we are dealing with contemporary documents which are a part of the cultural life of the people, rather than something handed down to us as have the classics