

On January 20th, 1873, Smith set out. He found a few new fragments of the deluge story and a number of historical inscriptions of considerable importance. He experienced great difficulty with the Turkish authorities which interposed many petty annoyances in his work and after four years of feverish activity, he fell ill of fever and died at Aleppo, August 19, 1876.

The interest which Smith's work had aroused resulted in the continuation of excavation by the British and by the French. In 1884 America began some excavations in Mesopotamia.

From that time to the present, various groups have been digging at different parts of Babylonia and Assyria and the neighboring nations. Great progress has been made in the method of excavation and of interpretation of what was found. Along with this has come constantly improving understanding of the language and the writing. Today there are still many gaps in our knowledge which are being filled up slowly, as new material is discovered and interpreted, while the dawn of history is being constantly pushed farther and farther back. Many periods which were before absolutely unknown to us or about which we had only a slight reference, with two or three proper names in the Old Testament, have now come to be almost as well known as any period of subsequent history. In fact, it has been said that we know more about the reigns of the great leaders of Assyria and Babylonia than we do of the Roman emperors.

It is easy enough to understand how this could be when we realize that all that we know about the Roman emperors comes from material written on paper which has worn out and been copied and then recopied and naturally in the course of copying, many mistakes can set in, while our knowledge of Ancient Babylonia and Assyria is based almost entirely upon writings made at the very time of the events with which they deal. Thus the only chance of an error in