

Archeology

Many readers of this Journal have doubtless seen an article, entitled "Biblical Detective Story," which appeared on p. 50 of TIME Magazine for October 29, 1956. The article seems to be a review of a book which is described as "The Bible as History (William Morrow & Co.; \$5.95), published in the U.S. next week," by "German Scientific Journalist Werner Keller."

The article begins with mention of a discovery, said to have taken place in 1929, by British and American archeologists, of a ten-foot layer of mud far below the surface at Ur near the Persian Gulf, under which it says that artifacts from the stone age were discovered. At first sight this looks like a wonderful authentication of the story of the flood. Unfortunately, however, the article is in error at this point. As a matter of fact, the Ur expedition found evidence of exactly the same civilization underneath the layer of mud as above, thus indicating that it was a local river flood rather than a catastrophic deluge. Moreover, similar flood layers have been found in other parts of Mesopotamia, from periods differing from this one by a few centuries. While I have no doubt that there was a great universal flood such as is described in Genesis, it weakens our case rather than to strengthen it, to give evidence that does not properly apply. I hope that this particular instance is not typical of the book as a whole.