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*BROWNING AND THE BIBLE.

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It is safe to say that no other book has had the influence upon the literature of the world that the Bible has, and it is also safe to say that no other literature shows this influence to the same great degree that our English literature does. From Anglo-Saxon times to our day, English writers have been using the Bible as a treasury of material to an extent that is astonishing. My purpose, however, this evening does not allow me to give a roll of these writers, interesting though that would be. To particularize would be well-nigh endless, for the sense of duty toward man and God is the bone and flesh of English books in their age. My object is merely to study the influence of the Bible in the work of one poet.

As time goes on it is becoming evident that Browning has a message for our generation not to be found in the pages of any of his contemporaries, and that he has a special claim on our gratitude and reverence as the most virile and spiritually awakening mind in modern English poetry. But Browning is more than that. He is the great Christian poet of modern times. He has caught the inner spirit of the Christian faith as perhaps no

*An address delivered in the Presbyterian Church at Davidson College at the annual Bible Society meeting, 1915. In preparing the address for publication, no attempt has been made to remove the traces of preparation for oral delivery.

*NIMROD AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM.

By the REV. PARKE P. FLOURNOY, D. D., *Bethesda, Maryland.*

We learn from the tenth chapter of Genesis that Nimrod was a descendant of Ham, and that his father's name was Cush. † Kish, the name of a very ancient city of Babylonia, the capital of powerful kings, one of whom, Ur-gur, reigned about seven centuries before the time of Abraham, is said to be the cuneiform of the biblical Cush. Boseawen informs us** that "The kings of Kish claimed the title of Nin-Marad," i. e., "Lord of Marad," and that "in this title we have the origin of the name Nimrod." This identification is confirmed, he tells us, by the fact that in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the very ancient Babylonian poem in which we have the cuneiform account of the flood, Gilgamesh, "the ethnic hero of the Babylonians," is spoken of as a native of Marad, and that, in this, "we have an additional proof tending to confirm our identification of him with Nimrod." New interest in this old city of Marad has been awakened recently by the discovery of two very remarkable inscriptions there. One of these was on a cylinder ten inches long, closely inscribed with an extended record of Nebuchadnezzar. In this inscription, Nebuchadnezzar speaks of Naram-Sin as his ancestor, who had built (or caused to be built) the temple of Lugal-Marada. Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt this temple, and tells us in the inscription that he found there the old foundation stone of the temple laid by Naram-Sin. The other inscription recently deciphered at Yale University was

*This article is one of the chapters from the manuscript of Dr. Flournoy's new book which will be published in the near future under the title, "New Light on the Old Testament."

This sample chapter indicates very clearly that Dr. Flournoy's newest book will be of equal value with the other splendid books which have come from his pen, such as "The Searchlight of St. Hippolytus" and "New Light on the New Testament."

† . . . the sons of Ham, Cush . . . And Cush begat Nimrod . . . and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Genesis 10:6, 8 & 10.

***The First of Empires*, p. 122, by W. St. Chad Boscawen.

this foundation stone or a duplicate of it, with Naram-Sin's inscription on it. In Nebuchadnezzar's inscription he speaks of Naram-Sin as his "ancient ancestor." The part of the long inscription of Nebuchadnezzar on the cylinder which refers to Naram-Sin as his ancestor is as follows: "At that time, for Lugal-Marada, my deity, his temple in Marad . . . I sought for its old foundation stone, I beheld, and upon the foundation stone of Naram-Sin, king, my ancient ancestor, I laid its foundation. An inscription with my name I made and placed in the midst of it."

This cylinder inscription near its end, tells of this as one of the building operations of Nebuchadnezzar, who was certainly one of the greatest builders that ever lived.

Naram-Sin was his "*ancient* ancestor," indeed (if he *was* his ancestor), having lived probably more than two thousand years before his day. Naram-Sin's own inscription, strange to say, has been found "through illicit diggings of the Arabs" at the same site. It informs us that, "Libet-ili, his son, patesi of Marad, built the temple of Lugal-Marada in Marad."

This identification of Gilgamesh, the hero of the Epic, with Nimrod is not universally accepted by Assyriologists; but no such uncertainty exists as to the fact that the ruins of the four cities which are spoken of in Genesis 10:10, as "the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom," have been discovered, and, in different degrees of thoroughness, excavated and examined. As to these four cities and the land in which they were situated, there is a general, if not universal, agreement.

To the Bible student, it is by no means a matter of vital importance whether the ethnic hero of Babylonian mythology, Gilgamesh, or Merodach, the supreme god of Babylon, is to be identified with Nimrod; but to us all, it is a matter of no small interest to find Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh rising from the dust to tell their story of the distant past.

"THE UNINTERESTING CHAPTER."

After reading the early chapters of Genesis, where we find accounts of the outstanding facts of human history after the

creation, and then, of that great catastrophe, the flood, described as the punishment of the world's sin, we come to a passage which seems to have little in it but a large number of strange names of men, peoples, lands and cities. This has moved some one to give the descriptive name "the uninteresting chapter" to this tenth chapter of Genesis.

It has become, however, to the Bible student, a very interesting chapter. The light of discovery has fallen upon it, and what had for ages been known as names only, have appeared in many cases, and in a remarkable way, as realities. The most ancient histories, even the works of Herodotus, "the father of history," would be searched in vain for the mention of cities with the names we find in the tenth verse of this tenth chapter, with one notable exception—that of Babylon.

The case is now quite different. Records far older than any extant histories have appeared, telling us about things of the distant past of which even "the father of history" was profoundly ignorant.

In the tenth verse of the tenth chapter of Genesis we find five names—four being the names of cities, and the fifth that of the country where they were situated.

The first city, Babel, has always been familiar to us as being also the name of the tower begun by the united descendants of Noah—a tower whose top was designed to "reach unto heaven."* In the Bible we have the name, usually, in its Greek form—Babylon, when the city is meant.

We are specially favored now with the prospect of reading the accounts of the last and most scientific exploration of the site of Babylon by the German expedition under the direction of Dr. Robert Koldewey, whose book, "*The Excavations of Babylon*," is noticed at length in the Expository Times, March, 1915, by the Rev. J. Blaikie, Edinburgh, some extracts from which will now be given:

"The outer wall of Babylon is a most formidable structure. The fosse was faced on its inner side by a wall of burnt brick,

*It is an interesting fact that this expression "reach unto heaven" is frequently met with on tablets describing high structures.

3.3 metres in thickness. Then came the main outer wall, also of burnt brick, and 7.8 metres in thickness; then an interval of 12 metres, and then an inner wall of crude brick, 7 metres thick. The 12 metre space between the two walls was filled in with brick rubble, so that the whole formed one tremendous structure over eighty feet in thickness. Not even the walls of Tiryns can compare with this."

"The inner wall had cavalier towers at intervals, which would show a single story above the outer wall, just as Herodotus says; and the broad surface of the military road along the top quite bears out this statement as to the chariots. Koldewey remarks that two four-horse chariots could pass each other readily on the top of the wall." * * *

(The height cannot be determined now), "but in any case, it must have been a stupendous and imposing defense." * * *

"Within the main walls, the main interest of the excavations gathered around two points—the southern citadel in the Kasr Mound, and the tower of Etemenaki and the temple Esagila." * * *

"Up the midst of the great triangular area between the walls and the Euphrates, there runs the main artery of ancient Babylon, the Procession Street. The middle section of this noble roadway is paved with fine limestone block 1.05 metres square, while the sidewalks are formed of 66 centimetre blocks of red breccia, veined with white, each block bearing upon one of its edges an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar. On either side the street is lined with lofty defense walls, so that it could be made a mere death trap for hostile troops; and these walls are adorned with lions in low relief in enamelled brick."

"Half way up the street the roadway is bestridden by the Ishtar gate, guarded by double towers adorned with enameled reliefs of bulls and dragons." * * *

"The ensemble of this gate, with its rows of gaily colored creatures, its bronze lions and dragons, and the huge flanking temple and palace must have been magnificent."

"A gate on the west side of Procession Street gives access to the first courtyard of Nebuchadnezzar's great palace of the southern citadel. Around the open space are many chambers

opening on the courtyard; as Dr. Koldewey conjectures, offices of administration. Multitudes of inscribed bricks here leave no doubt as to the building being Nebuchadnezzar's." * * *

"North of the first court stands the building which the explorer is inclined to identify with the Hanging Gardens." * * *

"Strabo and Diodorus state that the quadrangle of the Gardens measured 4 plethra, or about 120 metres on a side." "The throne room was 53 by 60 metres." "If any one," says Dr. Koldewey, "should desire to localize the scene of Belshazzar's banquet, he can surely place it with complete accuracy in this immense room."

The chief object of interest for many Bible readers would naturally be the tower called Etemenanki; but of this, which is thought to have been the tower of Babel, only the base remains, the debris of the upper structure—or what remained of it, having been removed and employed in another structure. The base is 90 metres on each side. The tower at its base, then, would be about 300 feet, the length of an average city block, on each side. We can only imagine what the superstructure was intended to be. The many "ziggurats," or towers, connected with Babylonian temples may have been copied from this immense structure, and with their eight towers, one above the other, may give some idea of its dimensions and mode of construction.

ERECH.

Erech is the second name in this verse, and it may be asked whether history gives us any account of such a city. The answer must be, that the most ancient histories tell us nothing of it. Yet Erech has come into the light of reality. It is found, too, that it was by no means an uninteresting city. It was the home of the hero of an epic which was written on clay tablets long before Homer said, or sang, or wrote, his Iliad and Odyssey.

Gilgamesh, the hero of this Epic, is represented in it as having Uruk (Hebrew, Erech) as his capital city. The story is largely mythical, and the scenes are drawn and colored with the brush of Oriental imagination, yet, it seems plain that Gilgamesh was a real man of flesh and blood. He is mentioned in connection with other men whose names appear in cuneiform

records, and is spoken of, not only as living in, but as having built, "the walls of peace-loving Uruk," this very city which the Hebrew writer calls Erech. Some scholars, as we have seen, have identified him with Nimrod, of whom this tenth verse of the tenth chapter tells us: "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar."

Professor Hilprecht, in describing the ruins which the Arabs call Warka, with which Erech has been identified, speaks of them as in the midst of a scene of awful desolation. He describes the mounds as "within an irregular circle, nearly six miles in circumference," with "well defined traces of an earthen rampart, in some places, fifty feet high."

Of the Ziggurat, or temple tower, of Erech the following is added: "The mass of the structure, which, unlike the similar towers of Muquayyar (Ur of the Chaldees) and Nuffar (Arabic name for Nippur), at present has no external facing of kiln-baked work, is at least as old as King Ur-Gur (about 2700 B. C.), whose name is stamped upon the baked bricks of the water courses built in its sides." (Excavations in Babylonia and Assyria, page 144.)

The name of the old city is Uruk in the Gilgamesh Epic, and there is no reason to doubt its identification by archaeologists with the Erech of Genesis 10:10. Of Erech, Professor Rogers tells us:* "Uruk was a border city, between northern and southern Babylonia, and long remained the center of a small independent kingdom. It was the place of worship of the goddess Nana of the Sumerians, with whom the Semitic inhabitants identified their goddess Ishtar. The temple dedicated to the goddess and called Ea-Anna (house of heaven) was built by Ur-Gur and Dungi, and afterwards restored. It (i. e., the temple) forms the ruin called by the Arabs El-Buwarije, while the general mass of ruins is called Wraka, which, unhappily, has not been dug up."

"The city had independence at an early period, and is coupled by Hebrew tradition with the earliest centers of the land (Gen.

*History of Babylonia and Assyria. I., pp. 291, 292.

10:10), and Babylonian records go far to prove that this is correct. It was, however, much more than a mere center of power. It was a seat of learning and must have had a library at a very early period. Many books in the library of Ashurbanipal and at Nineveh, especially religious hymns, bear colophons which show that they were copied from originals at Uruk.*

As to the character of the ruins of Warka, we are told that they "show the remains of elegant buildings in fluted walls, sometimes decorated with patterns formed of the circular ends of colored cones imbedded in mortar, bricks bearing archaic Accadian and Babylonian inscriptions, etc." "Remains of canals traverse the mass of hillocks, which in some parts are nearly ninety feet high." "The antiquity of the city is indicated by the non-Semitic (bilingual) version of the Creation story, in which its foundation is attributed to Merodach." * * *

"Erech lies half way between Hillah and Korna, on the left bank of the Euphrates."*

In the Expository Times for June, 1914, there is an interesting article from the pen of the veteran Assyriologist, Dr. Theophilus Pinches, of the British Museum, entitled "Glimpses of Life in Erech."

Of the documents discovered in excavations among the ruins of Erech, Professor Pinches received thirty for decipherment and transcription. Among them he has found tablets dated in the seventeenth and nineteenth years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, as well as one written in his twenty-first year. Among the names found on these tablets, it must have been a pleasant surprise to him to see in the cuneiform script the name Zerubabili—the Babylonian for Zerubbabel.

He also found many names compounded with Nebo, the chief divinity of Borsippa—the part of Babylon west of the Euphrates which separated it from the main city where the palace of Nebuchadnezzar was situated. As to the date of the Gilgamesh Epic, in which the city of Erech is mentioned, it may, with little doubt, be held that the legend in some form came down from a very remote antiquity, and that it is much

*Hastings' Dict. of the Bible, Vol. I., p. 702.

older than the copies containing the Babylonian flood story, with which we are familiar. There is a tablet and envelope (for these clay tablets are sometimes found in clay envelopes) of the Sargonic period, with a scene from this poem. This would indicate that the Epic was well known in the time of King Sargon I, and may have been composed long before that period.

ACCAD.

The capital city of Sargon I is called Agade, in the Sargon Chronicle, a name which is identified with the Akkad of the tablets and the Accad of Genesis 10:10.

Sargon's Chronicle is a remarkable document indeed, as we may see from such extracts from it as the following:

(1) "Sargon, king of Agade, through the royal gift of Ishtar, was exalted,

(2) and he possessed no foe nor rival. His glory over the world

(3) he poured out. The sea in the East he crossed,

(4) and in the eleventh year, the country of the West in its full extent his . . . hand subdued.

(5) He united them under one control; he set up his images in the West.

(6) Their booty he brought over at (his) . . . word."

By "the West" these old records designate the Mediterranean region, Palestine, Phoenicia, Syria, etc. Martu West is the name used for all this part of Western Asia.

Sargon I. was succeeded by his son, or descendant, Naram-Sin, who became as celebrated as his father. Indeed, in one respect, in the heathen estimate of those very early times, he seems to have been exalted to a still higher position; for we learn that he was deified. Professor Rogers tells us: "His chief city, or at least his home city, was Agade, but he calls himself 'King of the Four Quarters of the World,' in token of the world-wide dominion which he deemed himself to have attained."

But after all, "The kingdom of Sargon and his son vanishes

from our view as rapidly as it came, leaving not even a trace of its effects."

The name of one of Naram-Sin's sons has been known for some time; (Bingani-shar-ali), but it was not known that he had another until the name of "Libet-ili, his son, patesi of Marad," was found on the temple foundation stone discovered at Marad mentioned above.

As Agade is the Sumerian form of the name Accad in Genesis 10:10, and Akkad is the Semitic form, it seems not unlikely that the vanishing of this kingdom so suddenly was due to the coming into the Babylonian region of the Semites, who are thought to have conquered the Sumerians (or Accadians), and to have fallen heirs to their civilization, which has been found remarkably advanced for so early a period.

Agade, afterwards called Akkad, is thought to have been the capital of the northern part of Babylonia, which seems to have been called Mat-Akkadi.

Several of the Babylonian kings called themselves by the title, "King of Shumer and Akkad." Ur-Gur seems to have been the first who ever called himself "King of Shumer* and Akkad."

CALNEH.

That Calneh was a great city, and that it occupied the site now called Nuffar by the Arabs and Nipperu in the tablets, is fully believed by Professor H. V. Hilprecht, who has done so much work in excavation and decipherment there. The tablets which he and those associated with him in the four expeditions of the University of Pennsylvania's archaeological work have revealed much already, and as many thousands of them have yet to be deciphered, will probably shed still more light on the history of the ancient city.

The large number of Jewish names, especially names in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra and found on the tablets discovered there, leads him to say:

*The name is read as both "Shumer" and "Sumer." All Hebrew students know that a Hebrew letter is read either as s or sh, according to the place of the diacritic mark.

“There can be no doubt that a considerable number of the Jewish prisoners carried away by Nebuchadnezzar were settled in Nippur and its neighborhood, where many of their descendants continued to live as long as the city existed (about 900 A. D).” * * *

“Talmudic tradition which identifies Nippur with biblical Calneh gains new force in the light of these facts, strengthened by the argument that the earliest and most important Babylonian city, which occupies the first place in the Sumerian story of the Creation could not well have been omitted by the writer of Genesis 10:10.”*

Thirty thousand records have been discovered in the excavations. Among the many tablets were found the “archives of Murashu’s Sons,” a great business firm of Nippur, now published in an octavo volume by Professors Hilprecht and Clay. It is shown that the river Chebar of Ezekiel 1:1, 3 (called Habor in 2 Kings 17:6), was “one of the three or four large navigable canals of ancient Nippur.” In inscriptions it is called the Euphrates of Nippur, “a name occurring in the old Babylonian inscriptions of the third millennium B. C.” * * * (Ibid., page 412.) “It was the great artery which brought life and fertility to the otherwise barren alluvial plain enclosed by the Euphrates and Tigris, and turned the whole interior into one luxuriant garden.” (Ibid., page 413.)

It is also stated that, “In some parts of southern Babylonia the bed of the canal was wider than the present Euphrates below Hilla, while its depth at Nippur measured from fifteen to twenty feet.”

The supreme god of the Babylonians of Nippur was Bel, under the title Enlil. When Babylon became the chief city of the Babylonian empire the supremacy of En-lil was conferred on Marduk, the biblical Merodach, a name which we find in combinations, such as Merodach-Baladan and Evil-Merodach.

The tablets so far examined do not reveal the earliest history

*(Explorations in Bible Lands, p. 410.)

of Babylon*. It had probably been in a state of decadence for ages when the great Amraphel threw off the Elamite yoke and made it the capital of the Babylonian empire.

The first mention we have of it in these old records is in the time of Sargon I, more than seven centuries before the age of Amraphel and Abraham.

The ruins of Nippur are about thirty miles southeast of those of Babylon.

Of the importance of Calneh (later called Nippur), Professor Rogers has this to say:

"Nippur . . . is now the best known city in all Babylonia. The greatest discoveries yet made beneath the soil of the entire land were made here by the University of Pennsylvania expedition. Nippur was the oldest center of the god Bel (called En-lil in Nippur), and may be the oldest city of all Babylonia of which there is any known record. As Ur was the city of the Moon god, and Sippara the city of the Sun god, so was Nippur the home of Bel, and as these were the greatest gods of Babylonia, so their cities outranked all others in early political history." (Hist. Babylonia and Assyria I, page 293. *) All these cities are said, in the Bible, to have been "in the land of Shinar," a name evidently corresponding to Shumer, but used here to denote Babylonia in general.

Now, some may exclaim, "Why should we be interested in these discoveries? They cannot prove that the Bible is inspired and brings us a divine revelation."

It is true that no discoveries of this kind can do that. The divine character of the Bible must be determined by other tests, especially the contents of the book itself; its general effects on the communities that have faithfully received and used it; the experience of those who, through it, "have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Above all, Christ's word settles the question for those who believe on Him. But it is surely a thing of some moment to find that cities, countries and nations named in the Bible alone, as existing in times which have been considered

*Koldswey found that the water level had risen so that the earliest remains could not be examined.

pre-historic, are mentioned in enduring records made many centuries before any existing histories were written, and in the very region where the Bible declares they were. This proof of historical veracity in the Scriptures must be gratifying to all who love God's word.

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