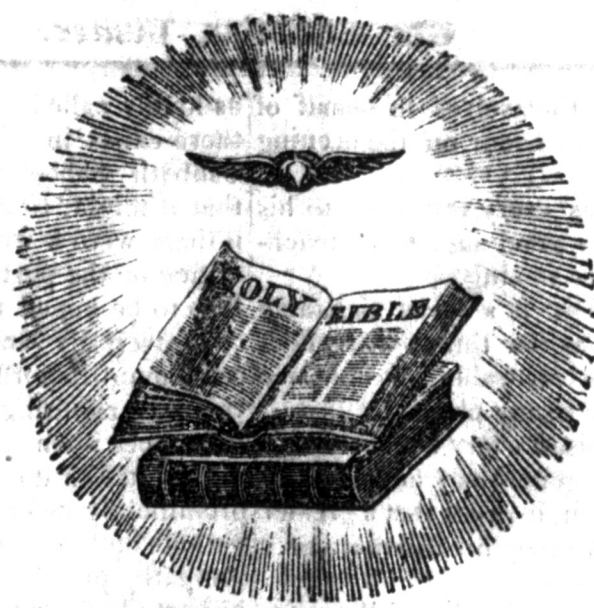


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WATER!

"Water! water!" cries the bird,
With his singing, gentle note;
And the liquid cry is heard
Pouring from the little throat;
Water! water! clear and sweet!
"Te-weet! Te-weet!"

"Water! water!" roars the ox,
While it rushes at his side,
Down among the mossy rocks
Rippling with its crystal tide;
Water! water! pure and true!
"Moo! Moo!"

"Water! water!" said the tree,
With its branches spreading high;
"Water! water!" rustled he,
For his leaves were very dry;
Water! water! for the tree!
Pure and free!

"Water! water!" said the flower,
Whispering with its perfumed breath;
"Let me have it in an hour,
Ere I thirsting droop in death!
Water, water, soft and still,
Is my will!"

"Water! water!" said the grain,
With its yellow head on high;
And the spreading fertile plain,
Ripening, joined the swelling cry;
Water for the grains of gold!
Wealth untold!

Water! water! sparkling, pure,
Giveth Nature everywhere—
If you drink it, I am sure
It will never prove a snare!
Water is the thing for me—
Yes! and thee!

Water! water! Young and old!
Drink it, crystal-like and sweet!
Never heed the tempter bold—
Crush him underneath your feet!
Water! water! Youth, for thee—
Thee and me!

[N. Y. Evangelist.]

ANTIQUITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

BY J. W. THOMPSON, D. D.

We speak of their great *antiquity*; but there is a vagueness in that word which prevents its conveying a precise idea. It is in this aspect like the word *futurity*. How old then are they,—the oldest of them? If Moses was their author,—the author of the first five books attributed to him,—they are not far from three thousand three hundred years old. Now we can form a proper appreciation of such a length of time only by comparing it with some shorter periods having definite bounds with which we are familiar. Well then, if we should find a writing bearing a date coeval with the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and giving an account of their voyage, we should regard it as a very old document. Since that time what deeds have here found a history—what forests have disappeared before the settler's strength and courage—what towns and cities have been builded—what wars have been prosecuted—what industrial arts have been established—what a magnificent Republic has been founded—what millions have arisen to people and cultivate this broad American domain! But more than fourteen such periods have elapsed since Moses led out the Hebrews from their servitude in Egypt or wrote the account of their exodus. Again, when you read the history of the English people passing from reign to reign, noting the origin of their institutions, the great events of

each epoch and dynasty, the great men,—warriors, statesmen, orators, scholars,—till you come up to Alfred and to Egbert, what an endless pilgrimage do you seem to have made! Yet England is only about a thousand years old, its whole life less than a third of the time since Moses wrote. The period when Rome was an unbroken empire is now so remote that we have but a dim apprehension of it; but the first emperor flourished only twenty or thirty years before Christ, and if we go back from that date through all the administrations of the (so called) Republic—of the Triumvirates, the Dictators, the Consuls—through all the wars and conquests till we come to the kings and finally reach the day when the foundations of the eternal city were laid, we feel ourselves bewildered and lost in the distance. Yet when Romulus and his men were constructing their rude huts, (if they ever constructed them,) Isaiah was proclaiming his prophecies in the ear of Judah, Solomon's temple had withstood the storms of two hundred and fifty winters, and Moses had been sleeping with his fathers full seven hundred years. Homer and Hesiod were six hundred years after Moses, and Thebes and Troy and Athens were but just springing into existence when he was upon the mount of Revelation receiving the law of the Lord! What a feeling of awe, of sublimity, connects itself with the thought of such an antiquity! But this is not all. The writings of Moses cover a period of three thousand years before his own time: that is to say, he lived just midway—far back as that seems—between our time and the commencement of the period embraced in his works. And what is a still more interesting fact, there is reason to believe that the book of Genesis is made up of documents that had been handed down from age to age and become ancient when Moses took in hand the task of editing and publishing them. Over what a field then—how vast—how interesting—how full of various wonders—how necessary to be surveyed by him who would know the history of his race—do these writings carry us! In how many singular and striking aspects do they present man to our contemplation! How many wonderful persons, wonderful events, wonderful interpositions of the Divine Hand, wonderful revelations from Heaven, do they call on us to observe and ponder! And what august conceptions do they inspire of Him who has lived through all this time, superintends the mighty forces, material and human, that have been in operation, and kept them all, alike in midnight and midday, close to his purposes and energetic in fulfilling them.—Himself unchanged, young now as when Adam stood before Him in Eden or when the morning stars sang the Creation hymn,—"the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

By their great antiquity then, these Scriptures are rendered highly interesting. Although not all of the same age, although between Moses and Malachi are contained the works of a thousand years, each bearing intrinsic marks of its own time, and yet all written under one great institution, the Law, preserving the same general features and character, although this is true, still even upon the latest of them rests the solemn fascination of antiquity. When other works have been destroyed by fires or barbarian devastations, these, by the favor of God, have escaped the catastrophe. A special Providence seems to have guarded and kept them. Histories and philosophies and arts and letters, how have they perished, and to what an extent has the memory of them been blotted out, since these writings, now so fresh and redolent, even the youngest of them, came into existence! And whatever the character of the ages through which they have come down to us, how have

they made a path of their own through them all as distinct from every other as the Milky Way from the orbit of a planet! Yes, they have chapters of their own in the world's great history,—effects of their own, peculiar, various, vast, and universally acknowledged; therefore they deserve attention and are able abundantly to repay it.—*Rel. Mag.*

Assyrian Sculptures.

Among all the various modes which London affords of passing time agreeably, perhaps none are at once so amusing and so instructive as visits to the British Museum. It is exceedingly rich in antiquities; and of these, none possess greater interest than the alabaster slabs dug from the ruins of a city, which is supposed to be all that now remains of the once mighty Nineveh.

There can be no doubt that the discoveries of Dr. Layard at Nimroud are the most interesting researches into antiquity that have ever been made. We read in Holy Writ of the mighty power of Nineveh, when in the sublime words of Ezekiel, the Assyrians was like a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches and a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature, when "all the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs; and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth the young; and under his shadow dwelt all nations."

But strangers, the terrible of the nations have cut him off, and have left him; upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches have fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.

The gorgeous decorations of the Assyrian palaces, the figures of "men portrayed upon the walls," "all of them princes to look to;" the Assyrian "captains and rulers, clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses,"—all have been destroyed; and now, after having been buried in mounds of sand for three thousand years, their remains have been discovered, broken and parched by fire, as they were left by the hands of the destroyer, to bear testimony to the truth of the Holy Writings which record their ruin.

The country round Mossul, the present capital of Assyria, is sprinkled over with mounds of sand, all of which, doubtless contain the remains of buried cities.

When Dr. Layard began his researches nothing was known of the contents of these mounds, except from the excavations at Khorsabad, made by M. Botta, the French consul at Mossul. Khorsabad is, however, ten miles from the Tigris, and, although the sculptures found there were very interesting, it appeared to Dr. Layard that they could not be the remains of Nineveh, which, it is well known, was on the banks of the river; and he therefore commenced his researches at Nimroud, a large mound twenty miles from Mossul, situated on a corner of land formed by the Tigris and one of its tributary streams, the Zab.

Here, when the mass of sand was removed, the palace of an Assyrian king was discovered, the mud walls of which were cased with a species of stone tapestry, formed of slabs of a kind of alabaster or gypsum, on which were sculptured, in bas-relief, the conquests of a king; probably those Sennacherib, whose pride and haughtiness are mentioned in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Second Book of Kings, and who lived about seven hundred years before Christ.

The walls of the chambers, Dr. Layard tells us, were from five to fifteen feet thick and were first constructed of sun-dried bricks, the alabaster slabs being used as panels. The slabs

were placed upright against the walls, care being first taken to cut on the back of each, an inscription, which is supposed to record the name, title, and descent of the king undertaking the work; and they were kept in their places and held together by iron, copper, or wooden clamps and plugs. It appears that the sculptures were carved after the blocks of alabaster had been fixed against the wall; and this appears to have been also generally the custom in Egypt and India. The slabs used as a panneling to the walls of unbaked brick, observes Dr. Layard, "rarely exceeded twelve feet in height, and in the earliest palace of Nimroud were generally little more than nine, while the human-headed lions and bulls forming the door ways vary from ten to sixteen feet. Even these colossal figures did not complete the height of the room, the wall being carried up some feet above them. This upper wall was built of baked bricks richly colored, or of sun-dried bricks covered by a thin coat of plaster, on which were painted various ornaments, which could generally be distinguished in the ruins. The plaster which had fallen was frequently preserved in the rubbish, and when first found, the colors had lost little of their original freshness and brilliancy.

One of the bas-reliefs, Dr. Layard tells us, represents the siege of a castle, which has three towers, and apparently several walls.—The besiegers have brought a battering ram up to the outer wall, from which many stones have been dislodged, and are falling. One of the besieged has succeeded in catching the ram by a chain, and is endeavoring to raise or move it from its place; whilst two warriors of the assailing party are holding it down by hooks, to which they are hanging. Another is throwing fire (traces of the red paint being still visible in the sculpture) from above, upon the engine; the besiegers endeavoring to quench the flame, by pouring water upon it from two spouts in the moveable tower. Two figures, in full armour, are undermining the walls with instruments like blunt spears; whilst two others appear to have found a secret passage into the castle. Three of the besieged are falling from the walls; and upon one of the towers are two women, tearing their hair and extending their hands in the act of asking for mercy. The enemy are already mounting to the assault, and scaling ladders have been placed against the walls. Behind them is a warrior, leading away captive three women and a child; and driving three bullocks, a part of the spoil. The women are tearing their hair.

On a bas-relief in the Museum the army is evidently going to battle; for the war chariots and all their decorations appear new and fresh, and the horses are walking. The standard bearers, who always kept near the person of the king, are represented as passing the walls of the city; and five ladies are on the battlements watching the procession. Three of these have their hands extended in the Eastern attitude of prayer, as though offering up prayers for the safe return of their husbands and relatives, who form part of the army; but the fourth is a young girl, who is evidently delighted with the show, and who is calling the attention of her chaperone, or duenna, to it.—This bas-relief appears, perhaps more than any other, to recal the time when it was sculptured vividly before us. The three thousand years that have passed seem to roll away, and ancient Nineveh to stand again as it was in its former state. With the human headed bulls and lions, and eagle-headed gods that were also discovered, we feel no sympathy, as they evidently belong to other times than ours; but this is so life-like a scene, that it might be a picture of what is even now happening in the East every day.