

article can attempt to do is to point out certain essential principles and to discuss a few of the more important points of contact between the facts gained by archaeological study and the statements of the Scriptures.

BIBLE DOES NOT GIVE A COMPLETE HISTORY

It is easy to see that the Bible makes no attempt to give a complete presentation of the natural sciences. Everyone can see how absurd it would be to attempt to write a complete biology or a complete geology on the basis of the comparatively few references to these sciences in the Bible. This is also true in regard to history, though here it is not quite so obvious. The Bible does not attempt to give a complete history of the universe, nor even a complete history of Israel. In fact, its primary purpose is not to give a history at all. This is obviously true of the New Testament; it is also true of the Old Testament. The purpose of the latter is to tell of God's relationship to men: how He revealed Himself to them, and how 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. At many points the history is stated; at others it is presupposed. Cultural features are not generally discussed in detail, but merely referred to incidentally 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 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. The Christian scholar does not claim that the Bible gives a complete history, or a complete biology or geology, but only that the Biblical statements which touch upon any of these fields are true.