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## CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS

PROFESSOR FINLEY DUBOIS JENKINS

“**W**ESTWARD the course of empire takes its way,” wrote Berkeley. Ships may go east, but tides go west. Westward across the empyrean Phoebus daily drives his chariot, while by night the stars join the universal motion. Shem stayed east but Japheth came west. And westward the course of Christian thought, joining its forces to the caravan of history, has always taken its way. And such has been the motion of all religious progress since Abraham who came from Mesopotamia to Canaan, the land of the setting sun. With seven league strides Christianity strode forth on the stepping stones of Jerusalem, Judea, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and in the 9th Century on the battlefield of Tours took Europe, and then in the 17th Century America. The Orient symbolizes the Past; the West, Occidentals venture to claim, is the home of progress.

When Abraham, standing in Mesopotamia faced the west and nightly pitched his tent toward Canaan he started, under God's hand, a powerful progressive movement that was not to stop till his “seed,” numerous as the stars throughout the earth, should all be blessed. That movement was the movement of revelation. “A rolling stone gathers no moss”; but an unfolding historical revelation does gather momentum. Reaching its climax in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, this completed revelation burst forth and on through the barriers of crucifixion and death, of Barbarian and Greek hostility, of the bloody Roman arena, of Medieval decadence, to the dawn of the Reformation. When Revelation ended with John on the island of Patmos, formulation of its truths immediately began.

Divine providence placed with infinite wisdom the unfolding of the doctrine of God in the east with its profound metaphysical talent. The doctrine of man was given to Augustine in the 4th Century. The marvellous logical sequence was continued in Anselm, 12th Century, who expounded the work of Christ. Luther in 1516 connected for the first time in history the work of Christ with the need of man in the doctrine of Justification by faith alone.

The most superficial glance at this progressive unfolding will reveal the wonder-inspiring fact that each of these doctrines has come forth in

## CONVENTION ECHOES.

## \*EXCAVATIONS AT KIRJATH SEPHER

PRESIDENT M. G. Kyle of Xenia Seminary and head of the exploring expedition operating in conjunction with the American School of Oriental Research, at Jerusalem, gave a public address on their work and findings. In cooperation were Professor Fisher, superintendent of all the work done under the American Institute of Archaeology; Dr. Garstang, director of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine; Professor Böhl of Groennegen University, Holland; Pére Vincent of Ecole St. Etienne, Jerusalem; and Dr. Albright of the Jerusalem School of Oriental Research, as the director of field operations.

Detailed accounts of this important archaeological work have appeared in the quarterly *Bibliotheca Sacra* and in the weekly *Sunday School Times*. Hence, but a few interesting points in the address are here given.

An important fact that vitally aids and enriches the results of oriental archaeological excavation is the ancient custom of rebuilding cities directly upon the previous ruins—rather than to clear up the ground as in the occident. This gives a “stratification” of debris, through which the local history can often be quite well traced.

Corollary to this is the science of ceramic history, the foundations of which were laid by Professor Sir Wm. Flinders Petrie. The types characteristic of the different periods of Palestinian history are well recognized, and divide that history into (a) Early Bronze Age—approximately 2500 1800 B. C.; (b) Middle Bronze Age—1800 to 1600 B. C.; (c) Late Bronze Age—1600 to 1300 B. C.; (d) Early Iron Age—1300 to 600 B. C. Along with the characteristic ceramic types found in the different strata are also found Babylonian and Egyptian remains which can be dated and so aid in establishing the dates of the former.

Accordingly, one of the first steps in such archaeological study is to make several cross-sections of the stratified debris by cutting down to virgin soil. In the case of Kirjath Sepher, remains are found dating back 2500 or more years B. C., and showing perhaps a thousand years of Canaanite history; while successive assaults and destructions of the place are clearly marked. At Kirjath Sepher the stratification gives a view of Palestinian history from about 2000 B. C. (Abraham’s time) to destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Exile, about 600 B. C.

This city was upon a high hill that rises almost precipitously on the north for about 700 feet; on this was a wall forty or fifty feet high, so that Joshua’s astonished spies spoke of “cities walled up to heaven.”

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\*Partial summary of data given in an illustrated address at the League’s St. Louis Conference by President Melvin Grove Kyle, of Xenia Theological Seminary, St. Louis.

In the original Canaanitish wall "the stones were so interlocked and laid pointing toward an imaginary central line or axis, that all the natural movements of the earth that usually shake walls apart only served to shake these walls together." The entrance to each gate was masked by one or more turnings, entered by a foregate and flanked by fortified chambers, where probably the city councillors sat, as pictured in Job. Underneath the city were secret water supplies and grottoes for storing grain. Practically every device of military engineering is shown in the fortifications of this city.

"Exquisite pottery found here, which comes from the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, and from the Early Iron Age of the time of Israel, shows a like development of the ceramic art; innumerable loom-weights tell of the development of the textile industry; and an exactly made system of weights show a high commercial development, which in turn implies a standard and such a government as could determine and enforce such a standard. Such development along all these lines necessarily implies development along other lines also. . . . Culture is never fragmentary, but as from a center out in every direction."

"The results at Kirjath Sepher, and indeed at every place that reveals Patriarchal civilization" makes the theory "that the Patriarchal age and the succeeding age down to the time of the prophets was a time of low culture in Palestine" "utterly untenable." "Such findings as these here, and as well those at Gezer and Jericho and Beisan, have caused" Professor Sellin of Berlin, Professor Lohr of Koenigsburgh "and other German scholars to repudiate utterly the Wellhausen theory, and is bringing about a strong return tide of conservatism among German scholars generally." "The archaeological facts now so well known make any such theory of wild men and wild beasts and no culture in Patriarchal Palestine quite absurd." "In the presence of such exact and revealing confirmation of even the allusions and hints of the Biblical record, all that radical thought that likes to call itself 'modern,' which rests on the idea of the historical untrustworthiness of the Biblical record is left foundationless."  
V. D.

### \*CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

PROFESSOR C. BOUMA, TH.D.

**T**HERE are many philosophies, but Christianity is the ultimate philosophy.

Does this mean that Christianity is but one of many philosophical systems which man has thought out in response to the urge of the quest

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\*Part of an opening address on "The Doubts of Our Age and the Glory of the Christian Faith," given by Dr. Clarence Bouma of Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, to The League of Evangelical Students at its Second Annual Conference in St. Louis, Nov. 26, 1926.