

**SHINAR, THE SCRIPTURE RECORD
OF THE CONFUSION OF
LANGUAGE
AND THE DISPERSION VERIFIED BY
MODERN DISCOVERY; A LACTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649247660

Shinar, the Scripture record of the confusion of language and the dispersion verified by modern discovery; a lecture by Dominick McCausland

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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DOMINICK MCCAUSLAND

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THE SCRIPTURE RECORD OF THE CONFUSION OF
LANGUAGE AND THE DISPERSION VERIFIED
BY MODERN DISCOVERY

A Lecture

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

DUBLIN YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND

JUNE 5, 1867

BY

DOMINICK M'CAUSLAND, Q.C., LL.D.



LONDON

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET

PUBLISHER IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY

1867

101. e. 126.

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LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE


SHINAR.

'God drave naunder and assigned their lot
To all the nations.'

THE rapid progress of scientific discovery, and the great increase of human knowledge, are striking characteristics of the present era of the world. Nature is yielding up her secrets abundantly to the inquisitive spirit and persevering research of the philosopher; and man is calling on each new fact, as it is developed, to aid in the expansion of the comforts and conveniences of civilised life. The ground on which we tread, and the air we breathe—the clouds above, and the ocean around us, so long silent and unheeded by man, are now eloquent of the presence and power of the Creator; and the smallest particle of the matter that contributes to the whole, reflects the wisdom and goodness of the mighty Architect of the universe. Strange it would be, if the lamp of science, which reveals in the stones and dust beneath our feet a deeply interesting and instructive history of their own past existence, did not shed some rays on the ancient records of the Bible, to develope their teaching, and multiply the proofs of their truth and inspiration. To dissociate the works of the Almighty from his word would be to cast a doubt on their having emanated

from the one omniscient source ; though many of the best friends of revelation, with strange want of faith, shrink from the recognition of the glorious harmony that subsists between the word and the works of the Most High God ; and even deprecate the study of philosophy, as opening a door to scepticism and infidelity. Some minds there are, so constituted as to resent the presentation of a new fact to their consideration, merely because it is a novelty which startles the mind, and requires the adoption of principles of thought to which they have not been accustomed. Others there fortunately are, who welcome new discoveries when it is ascertained that their foundations are sure, and entertain no apprehension that they will be found to be discordant with the pages of Holy Writ. Of such stuff were the foremost spirits in the march of civilisation and the spread of Gospel truth ; and without such, the world would stagnate again, as in the middle ages of our Christian era.

For centuries, all Christendom, with few exceptions, believed that God had made the world, and all things in it, in a period of six natural days. The Bible was supposed to have stated such to be the fact, and few believers conceived that there could be any doubt upon the subject. The first chapter of Genesis treats of the creation of the world and its inhabitants. The science of geology instructs us as to the mode in which our globe was formed, and the order in which its vegetable and animal organisms came into existence. When the science was in its infancy, it was generally supposed that the teachings of Genesis and Geology



were wholly irreconcilable ; but since it has struggled into its present state of maturity, it has been found that the order in which created beings have been shown by the geologist to have come into existence, is in truly wonderful accordance with that presented to us in the first chapter of Genesis, and proves the truth and inspiration of the Mosaic record—subject only to the condition that we read the word 'day,' in that chapter, as indicating a long geologic period of time, and not a mere natural day of twenty-four hours. And accordingly, there being abundant evidence within the pages of the Bible that the Hebrew word may be so understood, few persons of enlightened understanding have hesitated to adopt that rendering of the word 'day,' and to appropriate the irresistible evidence of inspiration that it carries with it. If any still desire to adhere to the natural day reading, they can do so ; but the valuable testimony that geological science has contributed to the authenticity of Holy Writ will be lost to them.

Again, the Mosaic narrative of the Flood was long considered as recording that all the dry land on the face of the earth had been submerged beneath the waters, and that the overflow had carried destruction to every terrestrial creature, from east to west, and from pole to pole, with the exception of Noah's family, and the few animals that were with them in the ark. The knowledge of later days has corrected our notions in this respect, by showing that such an occurrence as a universal submersion of the dry land could not have taken place within the last 6,000, or even 60,000 years ;

but that there are indications that a partial, though in itself an extensive, subsidence and submergence did probably take place in the countries surrounding Ararat and the Caspian Sea at no distant period of time, destructive of course to all the animal creation within its sphere, unless so far as some may have been preserved by human exertion. Besides, it is manifestly impossible that every known species of terrestrial animal could have been congregated from arctic and tropical climes on one spot in Southern Asia, and from thence diffused over mountains and across seas to the remote bounds of the earth where they are now found. And accordingly, it has been shown that the Hebrew text of the record of the Flood does not represent, and necessitate a belief, that the Noachian deluge was more than a partial or local catastrophe, or that it prevailed over any part of the earth's surface more extensive than that occupied by the race of Adam at that early period of their history, and destroyed them, with the exception of Noah's family, and the comparatively few species of the animals with which they were surrounded in that country. If any hesitate to adopt this reading of the Scripture record, it is open to them to reject it without injury to their faith in the great doctrines of redemption; but they must lose the testimony of the truth of the Divine record, which is, as it were, speaking from the very ground; and lagging behind on the highway of knowledge, they will find their usefulness as instructors impaired, and that many who ought to be their disciples will have become their masters.

We now approach the narrative of another event

recorded in the early chapters of Genesis, which has not met with as much discussion as the records of the Creation and the Flood. I allude to the confusion of tongues and the dispersion at Babel, which is about to engage our attention.

After the waters had swept over the abode of Adam's race, it became the mission of Noah's family, consisting of eight persons, to replenish, or colonize, the earth with their descendants. How that mission was fulfilled, and how that the arm of the Lord was stretched out to effect His purpose, is recorded in the Book of Genesis; and that the record of Shinar is true, I shall now proceed to show.

The localities of the three leading events of primeval history—the Creation of Adam and his fall, the Flood, and the Confusion of Language—are marked on the map of the world by the confluence of two rivers, by a mountain, and by a plain. Euphrates and Hiddekel, or Tigris, meet on the site of Eden, the scene of Adam's creation and fall. The mountains of Ararat look down upon the lands that were covered by the flood in the days of Noah. And the plains of Shinar witnessed the confusion of speech that caused a severance of the family of that patriarch, that has never been restored, and continues to the present hour. We are thus led to Mesopotamia, in South-Western Asia, the country of the two great rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, which descend from the mountains of Ararat, in the high lands of Armenia, water the plains of Shinar, join their streams where Eden bloomed, and pour their combined waters into the Persian Gulf. From the regions of Ararat