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ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

It is not always realized to how great an extent denials of the Word of God in modern Protestantism are due to the rise of the Higher Criticism. This movement has, to a large extent, consisted of an attempt to rearrange sections of the Bible in accordance with philosophic theories as to the time of their writing. These theories are quite generally based upon the idea that everything is a result of purely material developments, and involve, consequently, a refusal to recognize any positive action of God in revealing Himself to His people through the ages.

Christianity has always been a book religion. It rests upon the belief that God has spoken. Through the ages God has declared His will to His people. He led holy men of old to write down those messages which He desired preserved for future ages, and by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit He kept these writers from error. Belief in this fact has always been at the fountain of the teaching of the Christian Church.

Although the teachings of Christianity have been assailed from outside in many ways, they have never been destroyed. During the past two centuries there has come this new method of attack, more effective than any which preceded it. It consists of actions of men within the professing church, claiming simply to reinterpret the Bible, but actually interpreting it in such a way as to do away with its central teachings. These views, which originated in France two centuries ago, were extended to Germany and there widely developed. They then spread throughout the world and have been more effective than any other factor in producing the present wide-spread unbelief within the church.

It is interesting to observe that when Satan devises a new method of attack God always provides an answer. In this case, the answer came from an unexpected source. Just as the movement of the Higher Criticism was reaching its greatest development another movement began to come to the front, and this second movement has undermined the teachings of the Higher Criticism at point after point. This other movement is the movement of archeology.

Archeology consists in the discovery and study of actual remains of ancient times which have in many cases lain buried through the ages. Modern archeology began a century ago with the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone, followed by the discovery of the remains of ancient Ninevah. Since that time ancient civilizations, many of which had been entirely forgotten, have been recovered by the excavator's spade in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and in other areas.

A century ago ancient history extended back only to about 500 B.C. The Old Testament stood alone in its record of a great civilization which had existed during many centuries prior to that time. Today, as the result of the work of the excavator, history runs as far back of 500 B.C. as it now comes this side of that date. The Old Testament no longer stands alone, but deals with facts which form part of a great ancient civilization, previously almost forgotten. It is no longer possible to select sections of the Old Testament and rearrange them on a purely theoretical basis. At point after point it can be shown that the facts of archeology agree with the Bible as it stands and that they disagree with the theories of the Bible as rearranged by the Higher Criticism.

In the Old Testament we have accounts of events running back hundreds of years before 500 B.C. Great cities are described in the Old Testament, which were absolutely unknown to us about a century ago. The Old Testament refers to great conquerors whose very names had been forgotten. Whole nations, mentioned in the Old Testament, had completely disappeared from history. Today, as a result of archeological discovery, this situation has been completely changed. Instance after instance could be given where a great factor of history, long forgotten save for a brief mention in the Bible, has been rediscovered through archeology.