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A Romance &
a Vindication
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Rev. Thomas Miller M.A.



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EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908327-10-2

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-06-5

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Archæology and the Bible : a romance and a vindication

Author: Miller, Thomas

Published: Evangelical Bible League of Otago,
Dunedin, N.Z., 1934

Archæology
and
The Bible

A Romance and a Vindication

By
Rev. THOMAS MILLER, M.A.



Published by
The Evangelical Bible League of Otago

PRICE SIXPENCE

Order from
STANTON BROS. LTD., PRINTERS, DUNEDIN

*“And He answered and said unto them,
I tell you that, if these should hold their
peace, the stones would immediately cry
out.”—LUKE 19:40.*

Foreword

There appeared recently in the Outlook of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand the summary of an address given by me to the Evangelical Bible League of Otago on "The Witness of Christ to the Scriptures of the Old Testament." The following week there appeared a letter from Dr. S. F. Hunter, Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in our Theological College at Dunedin. In this letter Dr. Hunter quoted from my address the following words: "By the new science of archæology long-buried inscriptions, the ruins of ancient cities, etc., had been discovered. These had touched the Bible at hundreds, if not thousands, of points, and at not one of these had the Bible been proved erroneous, but at many of them the most assured results of criticism had been proved fallacious." He then went on to say: "Such a general statement means nothing whatever beyond what one wishes it to mean, and I am sure there are many, like myself, who would welcome a few particular details, especially concerning the most 'assured results' of criticism that have been proved fallacious."

The Editor invited me to amplify my statement in the pages of the Outlook. Such a request, like that of Royalty was almost a command, although for a busy minister it was difficult to do the justice to the subject that I would have liked. Apart from its academic interest, I can plead a deep personal interest in the subject, for this question touches some of us "where we live," even where our treasure is. Some have considered Dr. Hunter's letter to be a challenge. I prefer to regard it as a request. My articles in the Outlook are now offered to the public in booklet form by the Evangelical Bible League of Otago, with the prayer that the God of all truth may be pleased yet more extensively to use them.

THOMAS MILLER

*St. Stephen's Manse,
Dunedin, N.Z.,
September, 1934*

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Archæology and the Bible

I

Introductory

"I am . . . the Truth."—Our Lord Jesus Christ
(John 14:6)

In this introductory chapter I shall give the necessary background against which in the succeeding pages we shall view the results of archæology as they impinge upon the Bible.

A STRANGE ANOMALY

Speaking generally, I find today a strange anomaly in the Christian Church. Until recent years those who searched the Bible for its alleged errors, discrepancies, and deficiencies, and paraded these before the world, were practically all found outside the Church, and, above all, outside the ministry. Thus we have the Deists of the eighteenth century in England, Voltaire in France, and later on Thomas Paine, Charles Bradlaugh, and Robert Ingersoll. All these were outside the Church, which is where we would expect to find them. To our amazement and indignation we find that in not a few cases throughout the world and in practically all branches of the Church there are men holding the most responsible positions upon whom has fallen the mantle of Paine and Ingersoll. For instance, the attitude of Dr. Angus, of Sydney, toward the Bible and its teaching can hardly be distinguished from that of the sceptics I have mentioned. These, however, differed in this, that they had not promised to "maintain and defend" the things they seemingly delighted to destroy, nor did the Church pay them for their work. It is strange when an institution which should be the foundation of ethics becomes the least ethical of all. When the light that is in us becomes darkness, how great is that darkness!

For over 50 years the Bible has been attacked from every side by men trained at the Church's cost and within her shelter in Germany, Britain and America. They have repeatedly told us that they

were giving us "a better Bible." Yet, if all were taken out of the Bible that leading teachers of theology have insisted should be removed, there would be little left but the covers. For example, Dr. A. B. Bruce, though once an honoured professor in Scotland and the author of valued books, slipped upon this treacherous descent till in the pages of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, he said in effect that all we could now accept of the gospels was only a few lines. Of Canon Cheyne, editor of the *Encyclopædia* above referred to, the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll said that before his end he could not in any real sense be called a Christian.

OUR LORD'S ATTITUDE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Asking the question, How did Christ regard the Old Testament Scriptures? the Rev. Professor John P. Mackay, of Edinburgh, says in the *Evangelical Quarterly*: "I answer, to begin with, in the words of E. Haupt, a German rationalist, who in his volume entitled 'Old Testament Quotations in the Four Gospels' says: 'We recognise first what no doubt scarcely requires proof that Jesus treats the Old Testament in its entirety as the Word of God. Down to the smallest letter and most casual word, it is to Him truth, and that religious truth.'" Again, Dr. Mackay quotes a learned rationalist, a Unitarian, Dr. Toy, of Chicago, who in his work "Quotations in the New Testament" writes: "We know from the general tone of the New Testament that it regards the Old Testament as the revealed and inspired Word of God." True believers cannot take lower ground in this matter than a rationalist or a Unitarian. Canon Liddon in his "Divinity of Our Lord" says: "Between the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and the rejection of Him altogether there is no reasonable standing ground." He also says, "Paul never speaks as an authority on Jesus, but ever as the slave of Jesus." "Paul assumed," says Pfeiderer, "the irrefragable authority of the letter of the Old Testament as the immediately revealed Word of God" ("Paulinism," vol. 1, p. 88).

Let us remember, too, that as He was perfectly man, so our Lord was perfectly God, very God of very God. He was omniscient in that he read the future of men and events as an open book; He was

omnipotent in that He had all power over Nature, disease, and death; and was perfect in holiness, love, and truth. Asked by the high priest, "Art Thou the Son of the Blessed?" He replied, "I am." Of the Old Testament He said, "Not one jot [the smallest Hebrew letter] or one tittle [a tiny differentiating stroke in a letter such as marks the difference between our E and F] shall in any wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." "I am . . . the Truth." His dialectic overwhelmed the ablest men among the Jewish leaders when they laid their verbal traps for His feet. "And after that they durst not ask Him any more questions." But when in the wilderness He met Satan, the great foe of God and man, He used no dialectic. He laid all argument aside; He had recourse to only one weapon. His only reply was to quote three times from the book of Deuteronomy, "It is written"—nothing more, nothing less. It is impossible to imagine how our Lord could more completely seal the final and absolute authority of the Old Testament than He did on this occasion by His appeal to the Word of God, and to that alone. And yet Deuteronomy is the book which a school of biblical critics has called "a pious fraud"! Satan admitted the unanswerable nature of our Lord's appeal to God's Word by leaving the field a confessedly defeated foe. Never did our Lord supersede or qualify the Old Testament Scriptures. There is something almost blasphemously out of place when in this we do what He did not do. Even after His resurrection, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," and His disciples said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He opened unto us the Scriptures?"

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND EVOLUTION

During the last 50 years and more the philosophy of evolution has been applied to almost every department of human thought, including the theology of the Old Testament. Evolution has told us that all life by its innate capacity has climbed from a lower to a higher level, from the simple to the complex, from the savage to the civilised. Like Topsy, things generally have just "growed." Not

only have its exponents signally failed to prove this theory, but it is being rapidly disproved: "The factless theory of evolution" as it was aptly termed by Dr. John Duns, one time Professor of Natural Science in New College, Edinburgh. The edifice is crumbling on every side. Their concern and consternation is understandable seeing so many of them have made evolution their intellectual and spiritual home. It seems a long time since Hugh Miller in his "Testimony of the Rocks" pointed out that from the point of view of anthropology, man when left to himself, so far from rising, always degenerated. Geology was formerly supposed to prove this evolutionary theory. Now it goes far to disprove it, for rocks disclose no development in vegetable or animal species, and the different forms of life, except in the case of those that are extinct, are the same as those now existent. We are told that biology showed that certain organs of the human body were vestiges left over from an earlier ancestral state, being useless and even harmful. We are now told that they exercise functions of which science was formerly ignorant. Further, there is the disproof of the blood test. In Acts 17:26 we read: "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." There has just concluded perhaps the most exhaustive murder trial (Bayly) ever held in this country. In that trial one of the most crucial points in the evidence was that of the Government pathologist, Dr. Gilmour, that certain blood stains consisted of human blood. Thus the absolute and unanswerable distinction between the blood of a beast and that of a man was not only asserted by this specialist: it was conceded without question by the defence; and this in a case where the life of a human being depended largely on this evidence. The only question raised by the defence was the accuracy of the different tests as to whether the blood were human or bestial. That is to say, between the blood of man as man, everywhere and at any time, and that of a beast, however high in the bestial kingdom it may be, there is, according to the most modern science, a great gulf fixed. Archæology, too, with its recovered civilisations, inscriptions, and consummate workmanship (which in massive buildings, jewellery, linenwork, etc., we cannot now surpass), contributes its quota

to the accumulating disproof. "A primary axiom of the new philosophy," says the late Professor A. H. Sayce, of Oxford University, "was necessarily that anything approaching the level of modern civilisation could not be of great antiquity, and that consequently all claims in such a direction must be disproved. . . . The Old Testament critics assured us that the earlier historical books were a collection of heterogeneous materials redacted (i.e., edited and arranged) at a very late period, and containing little except myth and fable." "But," he adds, "we now know better. Babylonia and Egypt possessed an extensive literature . . . novels, poems, theology, long before the age of Abraham."

Now let us look at this from another angle. An objective atonement—which is the only atonement that the Bible knows anything of—and the philosophy of evolution cannot both be at the same time intelligently held. They are mutually exclusive and destructive. If the one be true the other must be false. If man is ever climbing upward by his inherent powers, why the awful cosmic tragedy and the sublime unveiling of God's heart enacted at Calvary? No! Apart from the Cross man falls, and his fall here and hereafter is endless; through the Cross he rises, and his rise is endless, both here and hereafter. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; he that is holy let him be holy still."

By nature we have devolution, by grace alone have we evolution—working out what God works in. When Professor Henry Drummond, of fragrant memory, was assistant to Dr. J. Hood Wilson, of the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, he preached those addresses which were after his death published in a book entitled "The Ideal Life." In these the note of atonement is clearly sounded. But when later he felt the full effect of the evolutionary philosophy the atonement disappeared from his message. One who heard all his addresses to the students of Edinburgh University has told me that in these he never mentioned the atonement. In his case the atonement and the evolutionary philosophy could not co-exist in the same mind. To remove an objective atonement from the Bible is akin to removing the heart from the human body—it dies. Twenty centuries and twice twenty—a multitude that none can

number, the true and universal Church of Christ, proclaim as with one voice that whatever negatives the atonement is and must be false.

"I marvel," said the late Lord Kelvin, "at the undue haste with which teachers in our universities and preachers in our pulpits are restating truth in terms of evolution, while evolution remains itself an unproved hypothesis in the laboratories of science." The late Professor W. Bateson, when addressing in 1922 the British Association of Scientists as its president, said: "It is impossible for scientists longer to agree with Darwin's theory of the origin of species. No explanation whatever has been offered for the fact that, after 40 years, no evidence has been discovered to verify his genesis (origin) of species." Then in 1929 at the annual meeting of the same great association Professor D. M. S. Watson in his presidential address to the zoological section said: "The theory of evolution is a theory universally accepted, not because it can be proved to be true, but because the only alternative—special creation—is clearly incredible"—incredible, that is, to Professor Watson, notwithstanding the fact that the Word of God opens with these words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Of a truth, when a man has no faith in God and His Word he has no lack of credulity.

It is a most signal instance of the overruling providence of God that almost contemporaneous with the modern destructive criticism of the Bible a new science—archæology—has come into existence. To the subjective, and therefore largely capricious, fancies of this criticism are now opposed a vast objective body of silent but unassailable facts. Long-buried civilisations rise suddenly from their graves and, pointing to the Bible, say: "This is true"; while with the other hand they point to the destructive criticism of the Bible and say, "This is false." From the human side the story of this science reads like a romance; from the divine side it is a striking proof of the miraculous superintendence of God.

Rise of Archaeology and the Objective Solidity of its Proofs

"I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."—Our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 19:40).

The modern scientific era with its amazing progress was ushered in by Francis Bacon, who turned the attention of thoughtful inquirers from the vagaries of the *a priori* or deducive reasoning of the scholastics to the solid reality of the facts of Nature and the certitude of induction. He said, "Begin there, on the solid earth, not in the clouds." The vice of much modern criticism of the Bible has been its purely *a priori* nature, its untested theories, its unproved hypothesis, and this both in the New and the Old Testaments—in the New by Baur and his Tübingen School, in the Old by Wellhausen and his followers. Archæology begins, where all true science begins, with facts, which are "chiels that winna ding," and by these the theories of criticism can be tested. The theory must fit the fact, not the fact the theory. As Dr. Kyle says, "The mirage of the desert may look like substantial waters and palms, but if the traveller, impatient of his way, turns aside to them, he will have a pathetic end." On the other hand, "the spade of Petrie at Abydos, of Evans at Knossos, of Schlieman at Troy revealed cloudland as solid earth." We shall see that the apparently solid towers and bastions of negative criticism dissolve before the rising sun of archæology, while the alleged myths of Greece and Babylonia, of Assyria and Israel turn out to be very substantial realities. "The mind in its thinking produces no facts except for the one subject of psychology." To use the ruder Anglo-Saxon of Dean Swift, the spider spins its web out of its own bowels, for its material the bee goes outside itself and makes honey. "Archæology is the science of antiquities"; it shows the environment of the Bible, and it is rapidly approaching the point of being an exact

science. It is 22 years since the late Dr. James Orr, of Glasgow said: "In the Wellhausen School literary criticism of the Old Testament came under the control of the history of religions and institutions; contemporaneously, however, with the development of this school a new claimant to be heard has put in its voice in the science of archæology, which bids fair, before long to control both criticism and history."

RUINS HERMETICALLY SEALED

In Western lands a builder always clears away an old building before he thinks of putting up a new one in its place. But this is what an ancient Eastern builder did *not* do. Whether it were edifice or city, he put up the new on the ruins of the old, a process which in the course of the centuries might be repeated many times. When Professor Kyle excavated the ruins of Kirjath-Sepher, in South Palestine, he found not only a city of Israel, but ten cities superimposed one upon another, one of them being the Canaanite city which Joshua took and destroyed. "You begin by digging in the streets of Jerusalem," writes a recorder of the discoveries of Wilson, Warren, and Conder in 1887, "and you come upon house-tops at all varieties of levels underground! It is probable that we have there traces and remains of older and more numerous generations than in any other city under the sun." Jerusalem has known at least ten or eleven sieges, and thus the ruins of one city lie upon those of its predecessor. How providential this has been, since in this way not only centuries but millenniums have been brought to light, and have confirmed so strangely the Word of God!

Pompeii and Herculaneum were suddenly sealed hermetically by the ashes of Vesuvius. In this way these two Roman cities were found exactly as when the ashen coverlet shut out the day. On November 11 of each year our nation stands for two minutes in silence. Activity is for the time held in suspense. Thus were those cities caught and preserved through many centuries. In a somewhat similar manner the sands of the desert, the accumulated soil, the waters and briers of the swamp have covered and in part preserved the ruins of ancient cities, their pottery, and tablets, by which their history is unfolded.

In Assyria and Palestine the moisture of the atmosphere has destroyed all records that were written on papyrus and vellum, for none have been discovered there. But the Assyrians largely used clay tablets as writing materials. On these they wrote with a stylus. Such writing material is imperishable. The great library of Nineveh, unearthed by Layard about 1846, was of this description. Herein we may find a further instance of an overruling Providence. There were also in all these Eastern countries the permanent memorials of inscriptions cut in the stone of monuments, pillars, etc., and some on rocky cliffs.

Upper Egypt is, however, practically rainless and the atmosphere dry. Here, therefore, great discoveries have been made (e.g., at Tel-el-Amarna) of papyrus documents. Papyrus was a reed which grew at the sides of the Nile, the same probably which formed the cradle of the infant Moses. It is the word from which we derive our own word "paper." In the making of it the strips were laid side by side, then similar strips were laid crosswise, and both layers glued together, the resultant material being extremely strong and durable. This could then be either rolled like parchment or formed into a book or codex similar in structure to our present-day books. The writing, in several colours, was done with a small brush. "It was only in Egypt," says Professor Sayce of Oxford, "that papyrus was used to the practical exclusion of clay. It is fortunate for us that such should have been the case."

PALESTINE

The position of Belgium as the battle-field for centuries of contending European nations has been the position of Palestine for millenniums. Placed at the confluence of the three continents Africa, Asia, and Europe, and on the highway of the most ancient civilisations the world has known, armies have there contended far back into the misty past and cities have gone down in ruin. It was the geographic and strategic centre of the world, the spot where, in compassion to a waiting world, God placed His chosen people to whom were committed the oracles of His revelation. From time immemorial it has been swept by war. What wonder then that travellers tell us it is literally almost covered with ancient

ruins. Most of these have long since been covered over with soil, and over them the farmer drives his plough and on them harvests ripen. I have myself handled some of the square fragments of a beautiful tessellated pavement turned up by the plough. The site of such a ruin is usually indicated by a mound or swelling on the ground, to which the name of "Tel" is given.

I have not seen it stated, but I think that the modern interest in Palestine, its topography and archæology, began with the letters of the Rev Robert Murray McCheyne, when in 1839, along with the Bonars and others, he was sent to the Near East by the Church of Scotland—an expression of its rising evangelical life and its consequent interest in the Jews. It is noteworthy that the measure of spiritual life in a Christian or in a church may be accurately gauged by the desire shown for the welfare of the Jews. By many graduations this may pass from the passion of our Lord when He cried "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not;" or of the Apostle Paul when he said, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," through stages of listless indifference to the deep-seated anti-Semitic hatred of Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany.

BRITISH PROTECTION

Archæology as a science was greatly hindered last century by the Government and the character of the people in Bible lands. There as elsewhere government by the Turk stood for corruption and ineptitude. Sir Flinders Petrie excavated the ruins of Lachish (South Palestine) in 1890. He says that his work was carried on under great difficulties. The people of the neighbourhood "were always in mischief, carrying away things that were found, overthrowing any masonry, driving off the workmen's donkeys while grazing, and worrying about supposed injuries to crops. What with needing to be always conciliatory to the Turkish official and to the Bedouin sheikhs, and yet never allowing anyone to obtain any authority over the men or the

work, the course of an excavator is not an easy one." And Dr. C. H. Irwin says: "Owners of land, especially in and around Jerusalem, have often demanded such exorbitant rents as to be prohibitive for the work of the excavator. Moslem fanaticism has been another factor to be reckoned with. Under the old Turkish rule it was difficult to obtain concessions, and even when permissions for digging were granted these were frequently withdrawn or hedged about with irritating and often impossible conditions."

In Bible times the usual way of securing money was to hide it in the ground, where, because of war or the owner's absence or death, it would remain and be lost. In "The Land and the Book" Dr. W. M. Thomson says: "Even in Job . . . we read that the bitter in soul dig for death more earnestly than for hid treasure (Job 3:21). I have heard of diggers actually fainting when they have come upon even a single coin. They become positively frantic, dig all night with desperate earnestness, and continue to work till utterly exhausted. There are at this hour (1855) hundreds of persons thus engaged all over the country. Not a few spend their last farthing in these ruinous efforts. . . . Persons are watching their midnight labour, and when anything is found they suddenly show themselves dressed as ghouls or jan and thus frighten them out of the pit and out of their wits as well. . . . We shall be annoyed in all our rambles over ruins by the suspicion, almost universal among the people, that we are 'seeking for hid treasures.'"

Matters in this respect improved at the beginning of this century, but the greatest improvement followed the late war, when Palestine and Mesopotamia came under the government and strong hand of Great Britain. The result has been a great acceleration in the work of archæology, and most of all has this been the case in the last ten years. The first British High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, created in 1920 a Department of Antiquities for the protection of historic monuments, the arrangement of a national museum, and the control of excavations. Even Jews have now their societies for the exploration of Palestine. The universities of England, America, Germany, and

Austria, societies and schools of archæology, great newspapers like the London Daily Telegraph, and private individuals such as Sir Charles Marston (through Professor Garstang) are all doing work of great value. The explorer is not now hampered as his predecessors were, greater facilities are afforded by the civil authorities, and larger results of a historical character are now forthcoming. It was not until 1846 that Layard's wonderful discoveries astonished the world. In the introduction to his great book "Nineveh and its Remains" (published in 1849) he tells us that prior to that date a case in the British Museum hardly three feet square contained all that was known to remain of both Babylon and Nineveh together. The excavation of Nineveh by himself and his colleague, Hormuzd Rassam, brought to light the great library, wherein were found not only the Assyrian account of the Deluge, but tablets containing astronomical reports, hymns and prayers, correspondence with governors of provinces, and other letters of immense historical value, many of which are now in the British Museum.

DECIPHERMENT

The story of the discovery of all these treasures of a distant civilisation is very wonderful, but that of their decipherment is almost equally romantic. How did these strange writings become intelligible? How was their voice, so long silent, heard again, and translated into our own tongue that we also might read them? I cannot take up these pages with the remarkable narrative of how Sir Henry Rawlinson took an impression with papier-mache of a tri-lingual inscription on a high cliff, and how by means of this the key was found to open some of their secrets. In the work of deciphering these ancient scripts many others have collaborated. When our Saviour was crucified a white board was nailed to the cross above His head, on which was written in the three spoken languages of Palestine—Hebrew (Aramaic), Greek, and Latin—the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." By knowing one of these inscriptions every passer-by knew the meaning of the other two. In an analogous manner, through bi-lingual and tri-lingual inscriptions, the age-mute languages of Assyrian, Babylonian, Sumerian, and Hittite have become vocal, and have

yielded up their secrets. For a fuller explanation I refer my readers to the various books on archæology—e.g., "The New Knowledge About the Old Testament," by Sir Charles Marston.

TOPOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

In closing I would add something on the topography or surface features of Palestine. The country is very small, being only half the size of Otago, so that Moses from the top of Mount Nebo would see a great stretch of it. The point with which we are here concerned, however, is the meticulous accuracy of Scripture when tested by the topography of Palestine and its contiguous countries, Moab, Ammon, Idumæa, and Syria, to which in numberless instances it refers. Dr. Thomson, to whose fascinating work "The Land and the Book" I have already made reference, laboured as a missionary in Palestine for 50 years, and his whole book is a beautiful vindication of the geographical accuracy of Scripture. Dr. Christie also, who has been for a similar period a missionary resident at Tiberias, told a gathering of missionaries and ministers a few years ago that he knew intimately every part of the Holy Land, and that not one feature of it had he found to conflict in the slightest degree with the Bible. "The theory," says the late Dr Kyle, formerly Professor of Archæology of Xenia University, U.S.A., "of the geographical and topographical trustworthiness of Scripture has been and is of wellnigh universal acceptance. . . . The correctness of geographical and topographical notes and notices in Scripture has been established. . . . Both the geography and topography of many ancient writings are treated with scant regard, and justly so. Even the works of ancient geographers are often questioned, and sometimes found incorrect beyond dispute. In contrast with this attitude toward ancient topographical notices generally, there is nothing in ancient history so completely confirmed and so universally accepted as the trustworthiness of the geographical and topographical indications of Scripture."

III

Did Moses Write "The Books of Moses" ?

If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words."—John 5:46, 47 (R.V.).

"If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).—Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The above question is one of very great importance, for its implications run far out beyond itself, involving the historical character of the whole of the Old Testament, and even the veracity and authority of our Lord. As whole libraries have been written on it, the difficulty of compressing an answer within the necessary limits may be realised.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITSELF

It is well that the Bible should first be heard in the claims it makes concerning itself. These claims are sufficiently emphatic. In the book of Leviticus alone no fewer than fifty-six times is it attested "and the Lord said unto Moses," and several times in the book of Deuteronomy we read "and Moses said," "and Moses commanded." That Deuteronomy should close with an account of the death of Moses should do as little to invalidate its Mosaic authorship as the fact that the concluding pages of Matthew Henry's commentary were written by another hand after his death should make it other than the work of Matthew Henry. Spurgeon's "Autobiography," in four volumes, edited by his widow and secretary, also closes with the account of his death. Does it therefore cease to be his autobiography?

In these days when the very foundations of our faith have been tested and denied, the sheet-anchor for many of God's people has been their Lord's authority and His unqualified approval of the Old Testament in its authority and finality. This more perhaps than anything else has prevented

them from being cast as broken wrecks upon the rocks of unbelief. "Out of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament He quoted in the course of His ministry from twenty-four in words actually recorded for us. Among His reported sayings there are to be found sixty-six quotations from, or allusions to, the Pentateuch, forty from Isaiah, thirty-six from the Psalms, and twenty-two from Daniel—yes, positively from Daniel! There is no escape from the conviction that Jesus treated the Old Testament as divine, and therefore authoritative." That the divinely-inspired writers of the New Testament did the same requires no proof. The Bible, Old Testament and New, is a living and complete organism, of which one part cannot be injured without injury to the whole. It is one and indivisible.

NEGATIVE CRITICISM OF "THE BOOKS OF MOSES"

The negative criticism of the Old Testament as far as the books of the Pentateuch are concerned falls under two heads:

1. Their composite as distinct from their Mosaic authorship.

2. The date at which they were written, many scholars affirming that they were written, not in the time of Moses, but 800 to 1000 years later—i.e., in the times of Hezekiah or Josiah. Most of my readers can see this by referring, for example, to the introduction in such a book as Professor Andrew Harper's commentary on Deuteronomy in Hodder and Stoughton's Expositors' Bible Series. Here Dr. Harper tells us that all leading scholars accept these findings of the higher criticism except Dr. Green, of Princeton. As Harper's work was published in 1906, we shall see that much water has run under the bridge in these intervening 28 years.

We are told that the Pentateuch is a patchwork of many documents by anonymous writers who lived long after the events took place which are there narrated. These alleged writers are said to be recognised by the use they make of the Divine names; thus we have J, the writer of those parts where God is known as Jehovah; E, the writer of the Elohim passages; P, the writer of the priestly portion; D, the writer of Deuteronomy. This is all pictorially represented by that weird publication

"the Rainbow Bible," in which these various documents are printed in different coloured type. Then other scholars, gifted with a still higher degree of insight, affirm that they can even discern documents within documents. They have persuaded themselves that they can even divide a single verse into two parts, assigning one part to one author, the other to another. In this way the alleged authors are increased to include P1, P2, etc. We are told that everyone who has a reputation to keep as a scholar says that Moses knew little or nothing about "the Books of Moses," and that these books were written not in 1400 B.C., as we had believed, but over 800 years later, when Israel had returned from her exile in Babylon. They were written by anonymous writers who wanted to hearten the returned exiles, and who to give their writings prestige and authority—well, they just signed Moses' name to them! In New Zealand or Australia today a man gets a term of imprisonment if he commits a forgery. It therefore gives one's moral feelings a jolt when he is told by very serious theological writers that the Bible, the fountain-head and custodian of Truth, is in part the result of forgery. "But," we are told, "it was a pious fraud." That seems to any unsophisticated nature to make matters much worse. We had thought these two words dwelt at opposite poles. Their association suggests the Jesuit maxim that "the end justifies the means," and one seems here to smell the "reek" of burning martyrs. If we are told that people viewed these things differently at that time, our reply is, Does truth alter with time? And how can the Bible, which creates in us a passion for truth, be itself the result of falsehood? In Deuteronomy, which these gentlemen affirm to be "a pious forgery," we find these words—"for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deuteronomy 32:3, 4). Luke says of our Lord after His resurrection, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Two thousand years ago, when speaking to our Lord, the Jews did not question the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, for they said, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement." Their words were spoken in answer to the Lord's question, "What did

Moses command you?" (Mark 10:3, 4; Deuteronomy 24:1). I believe my readers will agree that two lines of reasoning have been established against the results of this negative criticism: First, that of the clear and oft-repeated assertion of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, as to the moral or immoral anomaly involved. Let us now see if there is not a third in the

ASSURED RESULTS OF ARCHÆOLOGY

One of the most recent publications in which this destructive criticism is embodied is Dr. (Bishop) Gore's unfortunate "Commentary on the Bible and Apocrypha." Accompanying this publication were such sensational headlines in the English Press as "Theologians Declare Bible Stories to be Impossible"; "The Deluge a Legend: Anglican Scholars' Verdict," etc. Now it was most unfortunate for these theologians and for their publication that at just about the same time there was held at Oxford University the Oxford Congress of Oriental Research. Before the congress opened the Daily Telegraph invited some of its leaders, men in the front rank of the world's scholarship, to express their opinions on the new discoveries. Sir Charles Marston condemned as so absurd the higher critical theories of "folklore" in the Bible that he classed it as "pre-war scholastic debris," made in Germany, and refuted by "the most reliable evidence of the pick and spade." Mr. W. J. Crowfoot, excavator at Jerusalem, announced that modern discovery had "disposed for all time" of these critical methods, and that "the Bible texts had re-emerged rich beyond measure." The present Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, Dr. S. H. Langdon, derided the weakness of modern criticism in its "reckless tendency to correct the Hebrew text." He specially defended the book of Genesis as the result of a "mass of tablets" dating as far back as B.C. 2169. Professor Sayce repeated the fact that the finds at Tel-el-Amarna alone had "shattered" the fabric of the criticism of the Old Testament, and that "the old assumptions upon which the sceptical criticism of the past was founded have been shown to be baseless." Dr. C. L. Woolley, director of the joint expedition to Mesopotamia under the auspices of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, whose

discoveries at Ur of the Chaldees (Abraham's home) made recently such a stir, held that "the attacks made upon the Bible by the modernist school . . . were primarily directed against its historical value," but that "with the experience of recent years we can safely affirm that the facts are there." "Our knowledge," he said, "of the material world in which lived the patriarchs of the Old Testament is entirely new, and is increased every year by the results of excavations in Bible countries." Then, at the Oxford Congress which followed, Dr. Langdon, as president of the Assyrian section, stated that recent discoveries at Accad and in Assyria and in Hittite lands had literally "revolutionised" the whole study of "ancient history" and "Biblical criticism." Dr. Jacob also ridiculed and explained away the supposed two narratives of the flood.

While the editors of Dr. Gore's commentary were, as above described, responsible for so singular a newspaper performance, Dr. Langdon of Oxford, announced to the world his remarkable and conclusive find of the original traces of Noah's flood. It was really very unfortunate for the commentary and its editors, especially as it is possibly the last of the "literary remains" of that discredited school to which it belonged. Professor Sayce does not mince words when he affirms that "the so-called 'literary analysis' of our documents, which has been the pastime of scholars and amateurs for so long a time, is being superseded by the discovery and collection of objective facts. Long ago I protested against the time and ingenuity which it involved, and challenged its advocates to apply the same process to a modern newspaper. When they were able to refer the unsigned leading articles in it to their several authors we might give some credence to their attempts to slice up an ancient document, assigning each small fragment to an imaginary author and date. If this cannot be done where the language is that of the critic and the mental outlook is the same as his own, how can it be possible where he is dealing with a dead form of speech and an equally alien outlook upon the world? Those who have lived in the East today know how impossible it is for the stay-at-home European to understand the mentality of the Oriental; still more impossible would it be if the Oriental were one who had lived

and written more than two thousand years ago. Of one thing we may be certain: the literary and historical presuppositions and assumptions of the scholar in a European library will have little or nothing in common with the actual facts."

Before I pass from this general aspect of the Pentateuchal criticism I would like to say that the position as above described is extraordinary. Here are a number of laymen. It is true they are foremost and exact scholars, and are dealing not with theories but with facts. But still they are laymen, and we find them without fee or reward enthusiastic defenders and vindicators of the truth of the Bible. On the other hand we find a large number of Christian gentlemen, ministers of the gospel, and theologians, who promised to "maintain and defend" the Bible, attacking its veracity, and doing so with all the enthusiasm of propagandists. Had these theologians, in view of their Saviour's declarations, and because of the apparently unanswerable character of this negative criticism, resolved to suspend judgment, we could have understood it. But that so many of the sworn and paid defenders should become the determined assailants, and that the vindication should be left to unsworn and unpaid laymen—there is something here that makes us exclaim, "Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth!" They surely might have laid to heart the wise words of Paley: "It is true fortitude of the understanding not to let what you know be disturbed by what you do not know."

DETAILED DISPROOF OF THE CRITICAL POSITION

In view of the authoritative and unqualified words of the famous archæologists above quoted, and because they spoke to the world not from a golden haze of unproved and unprovable theory, but from a firm basis of objective *fact*, I need just indicate one or two of the lines on which their conclusions have been reached.

1. It went without saying, the critics alleged, that, at so early a date as the reputed Mosaic authorship, writing and composition could not be so developed as to make their books possible. They knew this *a priori* because the theory of evolution was already established! We have heard that at the first trial of the steam locomotive a farmer said to its

inventor, "But what if a cow got on the line?" "Aye," he replied, "it would be ill for the coo." The facts of archæology provide a painful experience for this theory of evolution as applied to the documents of the Old Testament as we have already seen. Professor Sayce has said that the papyrus discoveries at Tel-el-Amarna alone are sufficient to shatter it. These consist largely of letters and reports from Egyptian officials stationed in Palestine, which had been for 100 years an Egyptian province, and they belong to a period prior to that of Moses. But let Professor Sayce speak. "First Egyptology," he says "then Assyriology showed that the art of writing in the ancient East, so far from being a modern growth, was of vast antiquity, and that the two great powers that divided the civilised world between them were each emphatically a nation of scribes and readers. Centuries before Abraham (let alone Moses!) was born, Egypt and Babylon were alike full of schools and libraries, of teachers and pupils, of poets and prose writers, and of literary works which they had composed." Need anything more be added?

2. It was confidently asserted that Biblical personages at least as recent as Abraham were legendary. They were pure myths. Abraham was the sun-god and Sarah the moon-goddess. But that terrible archæological spade has proved beyond all peradventure that it is the theology and not Abraham which was the myth, and the "legendary" events of profane and Bible history were realities. Like some Biblical authorities, Grote, our nineteenth century historian of Greece, assumed that whatever preceded 600 B.C. was largely myth. As for Homer, the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" were only a badly compacted "body of lays" and the siege of Troy a "solar myth." But now the spade and pick have made Grote's mythical or semi-mythical age of Greece not only accepted as history, but the dates of the nations of that time can be nearly fixed. "As for the Siege of Troy, it has now taken its place as one of the important events in the early history of the world, and more especially of the trading relations between the Greeks and the Black Sea peoples. Mycenæ and its royal tombs have become as real as the Athens of Pericles, and the tourist can now wander amid the frescoes which once adorned

the palaces of the Tiryans. So far as Greek history is concerned, the rout of the sceptics has been complete."

3. We were also taught that the historical character of Moses was incredible, because it was impossible at so early a time for so elaborate a code of laws as the Mosaic to be in existence. But lo! a stele or pillar is found in Babylon engraven with the equally elaborate code of laws issued by the great Babylonian king Hammurabi—and this at some 500 years before the time of Moses!

4. Certain scholars also told us that no such people as the Hittites had ever lived, certainly not in Abrahamic times. Strange! Then the Bible must be untrue if external evidence does not confirm its statements! We read a good deal about the Hittites in the Bible. Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah for the burial of Sarah from the Hittites, thus suggesting their presence in Southern Palestine even in his time. There is the oft-quoted accusation against Jerusalem, "Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite" (Ezekiel 16:3). In King David's army was Uriah the Hittite. Professor Cheyne, in the "Encyclopædia Biblica," did not hesitate to say that the Bible statements regarding the Hittites were unhistorical. "In 1906," says Sir Charles Marston, "the royal library of the Hittites was discovered by Winckler at their capital, Boghaz Kewi, in Asia Minor, about 150 miles south of the Black Sea." Of the Hittites Lieutenant Conder says: "The veracity of the Old Testament account of the Hittite princes contemporary with Solomon had been deemed as presenting insuperable difficulties, but the indisputable testimony of the granite records of Tholmes and Rameses has left no doubt as to the contemporary rule of this powerful race in Northern Syria in the times of the Hebrew Judges and Kings." "When Joshua entered Palestine," says Sayce "he found there a disunited people and a country exhausted by the long and terrible wars of the preceding century. The way had been prepared by the Hittites for the Israelitish conquest of Canaan." And Dr. C. H. Irwin tells us that "in the time of Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the oppression, the Egyptians were again at war with the Hittites in Palestine, until a treaty of peace was

concluded in the twenty-first year of that monarch, who then married the daughter of the Hittite king. This is in itself conclusive evidence of the power of the Hittite Empire." The Hittites, we are informed by Dr. Garrow Duncan, held sway over a large section of the Near East from before 2000 B.C. to 1100 B.C., and Carchemish was one of their chief cities.

5. Not less complete has been the restoration of the environment amid which the lives of the patriarchs of the book of Genesis were lived. Let us take that of Abraham, in whose history only one incident need be chosen for illustration—viz., the Battle of the Kings at Sodom, which is related in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. We used to be told that this was legendary, and the kings mythical. But again I quote Professor Sayce: "As for the fourteenth of Genesis, which had been pronounced by German scholars to be a Jewish fiction, later than the exilic period, it has long since been discovered to have been of Babylonian origin and to describe a historical fact. When Abraham migrated from Ur, Babylon still claimed authority over Palestine, which had been a province of the Empire some centuries before, and Babylonian armies had made their way to the shores of the Mediterranean. At the moment it was itself, however, under Elamite domination. . . . In 'Tidal, King of Nations,' we have one whose followers, known to the Babylonian writers as Umman Manda (the Nations), had already penetrated to the southern part of the Babylonian territory. As for Amraphel (of the Bible), 'King of Shinar' (i.e. Babylon), his identity with Hammurabi (of the monuments) was at first received with the usual unbelief of the biblical critic, quietly withdrawn, however when it was subsequently discovered that even in cuneiform (wedge shaped) letters his name was also written Ammuriapi." In a letter of 1909 Sayce said: "The bankruptcy of the Higher Criticism when tested by the discoveries of facts of scientific archæology . . . has been complete in Western Asia as well as in Greece."

Professor Eerdman occupies the chair formerly held by Kuenen, of the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen coalition. In referring to an essay by Gunkel,

Eerdman declares: "With this essay on the composition of Genesis I withdraw from the critical school, and oppose the so-called documentary theory in general." Dr. Adam C. Welch, professor of Hebrew in Edinburgh, some years ago also joined the ranks of the opponents. The higher critical view of Genesis 14 is evidently beyond the possibility of resuscitation. As Dr. Melvin G. Kyle bears witness: "The attempted recrudescence of the destructive theory at this point by Dr. Driver, in the seventh edition of his 'Genesis,' if one may yield to the temptation to be facetious on such a subject, puts us in mind amusingly of the sometime attempt of strawberry plants to blossom in the autumn."

The Creation

The stone shall cry out of the wall.—Habakkuk 2:11

When Layard, nearly a century ago, discovered in the ruins of Mesopotamia inscriptions which told of a great flood it was at once assumed by negative criticism that this proved the biblical account to be borrowed from that of Babylon. In the introduction to his book on Genesis in the "International Critical Commentary" Dr. Skinner said, "The discovery of the Babylonian versions of the creation and deluge traditions puts it beyond reasonable doubt that these were the originals from which the Bible accounts have been derived." But the great Oriental scholar Professor Hommel shows that while in some points the Babylonian accounts confirm the Genesis narrative, the differences are so great that the latter could not have been derived from the former. He sums up by saying that the more he steeps himself in the secrets of the Oriental world, Babylonian and South Arabian, the more he is convinced that the views of Wellhausen about the late date of the Pentateuch are thoroughly false.

In the introduction to his book "Babylonian Life and History," published in 1925, Sir E. A. Wallis Budge says: "A reference must here be permitted to the attempts that have been made by the late Professor F. Delitzsch and his followers to belittle the religion and literature of the Hebrews (i.e., the Bible) and to prove that they were derived from the Babylonians. . . . He who seeks to find in Babylonian religious text any expression of the conception of God Almighty as the great, unchanging, just, and eternal God or as the loving, merciful Father; or any expression of the consciousness of sin, coupled with repentance; or of an intimate personal relationship to God, will seek in vain. The fundamental conceptions are essentially different. . . . Had Delitzsch known more of Hebrew and Babylonian literature he would never have written thus."

Dr. T. G. Pinches, lecturer in Assyrian in the University of London and editor of the Cuneiform Texts published by the trustees of the British Museum, tells us that the Babylonian narrative has an entirely different conception of what took place ere man appeared on the earth, and he concludes by saying: "The Babylonian account of the creation, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, differs so much from the biblical account that they are to all intents and purposes two different narratives." Dr. A. Jeremias, lecturer in the University of Leipzig, well sums up the difference: "In place of the mythological world of gods, who deceive and outwit each other and capriciously abuse mankind, who appear in childish fright of the flood and then again re-appear in greedy curiosity at the sacrifice of Noah, we find in the Bible the wrathful God Who judges the world and Who has mercy upon the righteous. The Bible story of the deluge possesses an intrinsic power, even to the present day, to awaken the conscience of the world, and the biblical chronicler wrote it with this educational and moral end in view. Of this end there is no trace in the extra-biblical records of the deluge."

THE FLOOD

We used to be told that the story of a great flood in which the civilisation and people of its time were destroyed was pure legend. It now turns out to be actual history. As the Mesopotamian Valley was the cradle of the human race, it is sufficient to believe that the flood would be confined to this area. Until quite recent times we had no objective proof that there had been such a flood, but now the undeniable demonstration of its truth has come to light and been published to the world. The proof of the flood was discovered almost simultaneously by Dr. Langdon's (1928-9) expedition at Kish, near Babylon, and by Dr. Woolley when excavating Ur of the Chaldees, a good deal further south, about halfway between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf. Dr. Woolley's account of the discovery runs as follows: "The shafts went deeper, and suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish, we were in perfectly clean clay uniform throughout, the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by

water. The workmen declared we had come to the bottom of everything, the river silt. . . I sent the men back to deepen the hole. The clean clay continued without change until it had attained a thickness of a little over eight feet. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and we were once more in layers of rubbish full of stone implements and pottery. . . No ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank. Eight feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history. That it was so is further proved by the fact that the clay bank marks a definite break in continuity; a whole civilisation which existed before it is lacking above it. . . There could be no doubt that the flood was the flood on which is based the story of Noah."

Similarly Dr. Langdon writes: "The flood stratum is invariably unpierced. Whatever is found below it belongs to the pre-diluvian period." And so over another critical "myth" we may pronounce the words, "Requiescat in pace."

IN THE BEGINNING—ONE GOD (MONOTHEISM)

About sixty years ago in his book "The History [!] of Israel," Wellhausen constructed a plausible theory of the development of Israel's religion as having developed from polytheism (the worship of many gods) to henotheism (the worship of one tribal god), till at last it rose to monotheism, the conception of one Supreme God. Did he provide any objective proof of this theory? Not a scintilla. How amazing is the vogue it has had! As the theory of evolution was accepted as true, this theory seemed a logical sequence.

Kuenen says in the same strain: "To what one may call the universal or at least the common, theory that religion begins with fetishism, then develops into polytheism, and then, but not before ascends to monotheism—that is to say, if this highest stage be reached—to this rule the Semites (Jews, hence the biblical accounts) are no exception."

Osterley and Robinson in "Hebrew Religion" confidently affirm: "We have seen that religious belief in its gradual development among early races

passed through the stages of animism and polytheism. Since this is recognised as a universal rule among all peoples whose religion develops sufficiently, we may assume that the Hebrews or their forbears were no exception." Along the same line we find that the "Cambridge Ancient History" (vol. 1, p. 531) says, "There is no heaven in the Semitic or Sumerian beliefs."

The excavators in Mesopotamia have revealed a vast civilisation extending back some five or six thousand years before the Christian era. With these discoveries before him, and in contradiction of the theory that religion ascended from totemism (worship of the images of beasts and birds) and animism (belief that inanimate things, e.g., trees, are indwelt by spirits) through polytheism up to monotheism, Dr. Langdon, of Oxford, writes: ". . . I therefore reject the totemistic theory absolutely. Early Canaanitish and Hebrew religions are far beyond primitive totemism (if it ever existed among them) in the period when any definite information can be obtained about them. . . . All Semitic tribes appear to have started with a single tribal deity whom they regarded as the Divine Creator of his people." He later says: "The Semitic word for God meant originally 'He Who is High,' . . . and here also I believe that their religion began with monotheism." As a result of his discoveries at Kish he also says: "In my opinion the history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from monotheism to extreme polytheism and a widespread belief in evil spirits. It is in a very true sense the history of the fall of man." He also shows that the principal deity among the Phœnicians was Elioun, and that He was called "Most High." Commenting on this, Sir Charles Marston says: "It is obvious that this Elioun is the same as El Elyon, the 'Most High God' whose priest was Melchizedek (Genesis 14; Hebrews 7)." The same monotheistic conception is clearly shown by other writers to be the case in the religion of Egypt, in Zeus of the Greeks, Jupiter among the Romans, and Tyr of the old Norse. Langdon also shows that before 2000 B.C. Mesopotamian tablets reveal belief in a heaven for the righteous. And this was before the time of Abraham.

MELCHIZEDEK

For most Christian people the subject of Melchizedek has been puzzling. The first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible is in Genesis 14. Abraham had pursued the confederate Kings, who had captured Sodom and taken prisoner his nephew Lot, had surprised and defeated them, and recovered the prisoners together with much spoil. When returning from the north he came to Jerusalem, where we read "Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine," and that he blessed Abraham, and received from him tithes of the spoil he had taken. "This," says Dr. C. H. Irwin, "is one of the incidents on which much light has been thrown by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets," discovered in 1887. (Tel-el-Amarna seems to have been the Egyptian Foreign Office). Amongst these is a letter from Ebed-Tob, who describes himself as the King of Salem (i.e., Jerusalem). Some valuable facts, as Professor Sayce has pointed out, emerge from this discovery. First of all there was, several years before the Israelites entered Canaan from Egypt, in the fourth generation after Abraham, a city strong enough to give its name to a king. Secondly, the name of the city is the same both in Genesis and in the letter from the King of Salem, as "Uru-Salem" in the tablets means "city of Salem." Thirdly, the language used by this king in his letter fully bears out the description of the early King of Salem in Genesis. He says, "Neither my father nor my mother have exalted me in this place"—a striking explanation of an expression in Hebrews 7:3 which has puzzled many, that Melchizedek was "without father or mother." He also says that "the oracle (or arm) of the Mighty King established me in the house of my father"—that is to say, he had no hereditary right to his position, but had received and held it directly from his lord the Pharaoh of Egypt. In this sense therefore he was without father or mother.

The Hyskos conquerors of Egypt had probably emigrated, like Abraham, from the East, and Melchizedek seems to have been one of their priestly aristocracy, and had been left as the priestly King of Jerusalem. By his association as priest of the one true Deity "El Elyon, the Most High God," he was, as Sir Charles Marston points out, one of those

priests who, like Abraham, remained faithful to the original monotheistic conceptions of the Semitic race, and one who had chosen Jerusalem for his residence. Both he and Abraham were seeking to preserve the pure and holy light of the worship of the one only and true God. Professor Sir George Adam Smith, because of the light thrown on this subject by Macalister's excavations in Palestine, concedes the originally monotheistic character of religion, and regards both Abraham and Melchizedek as among its last representatives.

DISCOVERIES AT GERAR

Professor John R. Mackay, D.D., of Edinburgh, tells us that "splendid work has recently been done in and about Gerar. Destructive critics have been wont to relegate what Genesis tells us of Abraham's and Isaac's intromissions with Abimelech to be unhistorical, largely because—

"1. The Bible narrative regards this king and his people as Philistines; and it was too early, they said, for the Philistines to be there.

"2. A certain Phicol is found both in the Abraham and in the Isaac incidents. This shows (they say) that the one story is told with variations twice over. What is archæology's answer?

"1. The Philistines were in force in Gerar in Abraham's time.

"2. As for Phicol, that is the name of the office (like Pharaoh), not of the man. If the corresponding officer of state were present at a conceivable interview between the King of Gerar and Jacob the son of Isaac, he would still be styled the Phicol." And then Dr. Mackay continues: "Thus, wherever archæology comes to the bedrock of fact, if the discovery bears on a biblical incident, there we find the Bible confirmed."

As Dr. Melvin G. Kyle puts it in the *Evangelical Quarterly*, "These are but a few instances of the historical parallels being furnished by the work of the archæologists. Every new one that appears certifies some event of Bible narrative as a real event. . . . We are seeking to get the facts, whatever they may be; thus far all parallels attest the biblical narrative." Dr. Mackay further adds:

"The fact is that the most distinguished archæologists are nowadays finding it most useful and most necessary to take the biblical data as the very instruments of their discoveries in other fields."

On one occasion when there was a famine in Palestine, the Bible tells us that Abraham went to Egypt, a country which is known to have been the granary of the surrounding lands. On the occasion of another famine he went to Gerar, as Isaac did later under the same circumstances. That Gerar was the grain-growing centre of South Palestine is proved by the discovery in its ruins of a great number of flint sickles, photographs of which are given by Lady Flinders Petrie.

AT KIRJATH-SEPHER

Debir, or Kirjath-Sepher (city of books), is, like Gerar, in South Palestine. It was taken by Joshua (Joshua 10:38, 39), but the Israelites appear to have lost possession of it, for some years later (Joshua 15:15-20) Caleb had to retake it, and in its capture Othniel won by his prowess the hand of Caleb's daughter. In 1926, in 1930, and subsequently the late Dr. Kyle, along with Dr. Allbright, employed a large band of men in excavating its ruins. "The ruins of ten cities," Dr. Kyle tells us, "are distinctly traceable in this mound; Kerjath-Sepher was in itself a decapolis. Each of these ten cities from the bottom to the top is separated from the next by a burned level. . . . The founding of Kirjath-Sepher was contemporaneous with the story of Abraham and Lot and the destruction of the Cities of the Plain (in the valley of the Jordan) It strangely links up with the story of Lot and the angels. There the messengers of warning suggested that they remain in the streets of Sodom all night. Lot knew but too well the men of Sodom, and insisted that the angels come into his house. They did so. The lascivious mob tried to follow. They battered at the door, but the door was mob-proof. These brief details reveal much concerning political and sociological conditions at Sodom in that age. Police protection was very poor, and house construction was planned accordingly. Now at Kirjath-Sepher in contemporaneous times we found a great courtyard, as of a caravansary, with brazier for cooking and a place for the feeding of

horses. Some chick-peas, well roasted, were found at the brazier—food cooked nearly 4000 years ago. This house had strong walls, and a great door, the very large door-socket of which was still *in situ* (in its place). So exactly did it conform to the conditions called for by the story of Lot and the angels that the staff immediately dubbed this 'the Abrahamic house.' . . . Note the strikingly different conditions revealed (in this same city of Kirjath-Sepher, but in a later age) in the city of the kings of Judah from Rehoboam down, even the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries, to the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Here many houses and scores of doors were found, but a door socket was almost unknown; the people used only archways or curtains. . . . Now how would anyone writing in the eighth or seventh century B.C., under such sociological and political conditions, describe or know to attribute to the days of Abraham and Lot such conditions as are reflected in the story of Lot and the angels? . . . If there were no Italian or Spanish records, could anyone now, 500 years after the days of Columbus, write an accurate account of the events of his time!"

SAMSON'S LAST EFFORT

We find the account of this in Judges 16:23-30. I had personally always found it difficult to envisage this narrative. The passage relates how the lords of the Philistines held a thanksgiving service to their god Dagon because he had delivered Samson into their hands. They demanded that Samson in his blindness should be brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for them. Not only was the house filled with the lords of the Philistines and their ladies, but a great crowd had gathered on the roof to see the spectacle. Dr. C. H. Irwin tells us that "fresh light is thrown upon the story of Samson's death by the construction of the houses at Gezer, which were no doubt similar to those at Gaza." "The local colouring," says Dr. J. Garrow Duncan, "is correct. . . . We may assume that the lords and their ladies were assembled in the house proper, while Samson performed in the open court." Thus he had two audiences, one within the building and another on the roof, the end of the building being open. "Sometimes," says Professor Macalister, "a

chamber was too wide to be spanned by a single length of roofing timber. In that case two lengths had to be used, with their ends meeting in the middle and supported by columns. It is probable that these columns were of wood, but a flat stone was placed under their feet to support them, and to prevent the weight of the roof above from pressing into the soft earth floor. To slip the pillars from the footstones would not be an impossible task for a strong man, and to do so would obviously bring the house down." Referring to the Samson incident, Macalister adds: "A little study of the passage shows that the temple must have consisted essentially of a *cella* with a flat roof, a deep distyle portico, and a forecourt open to the sky. The blind prisoner was conducted to the forecourt, where by tricks of strength and buffoonery he was compelled to give amusement to the grandees of the Philistines in the shade of the portico (cf. verse 20: the house fell *upon* the lords") and the 3000 commoners assembled on the roof. When weary he was allowed to rest awhile, no doubt to gather strength for more entertainment. The natural place to allow him to rest would be just between the pillars of the portico, which would give him the advantage of the shade without incommoding the lords. Taking the opportunity, he entwined himself about the pillars, braced himself against them, and then, putting forth his full strength and giving them a thrust, he dislodged the feet of the columns sufficiently to make the whole portico come down with its own weight."

A SAMSONIAN EXPLOIT

"Recently," says Dr. Aitkinson, "Sir Flinders Petrie has found in Gaza a weapon made of the jaw of a horse or ass, with the teeth sharpened." Petrie calls it "a formidable weapon." In a strong and skilful hand it would be more effective than the greenstone mere of our own Maoris. Dr. Aitkinson comments, "This discovery clearly illustrates the incident described in Judges 15:15, 16."

The Exodus

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

—Hebrews 11:30

In connection with the departure of Israel from Egypt and their journey to Kadesh-Barnea, in South Palestine, where they would have attacked the Canaanite nations on their flank, till, forty years later, when they drove a wedge into the country by attacking it at Jericho, the biblical record of their progress is proved by archæology as conclusively as the "assured results" of negative criticism have been disproved.

From the pen of Professor Yahuda, of Oxford, several articles recently appeared in the Outlook. In these he showed the large number of Egyptian words which occurred in the "Books of Moses." Criticism said that these books were written more than 800 years later than the events they reported. Professor Yahuda's articles, however, showed that the presence of these Egyptian words went far to prove that the writings were contemporaneous with the events they described. But the case for their historicity in this connection is stronger even than he states, for a number of these words occur in Egyptian documents and inscriptions of the time of the Exodus and never later. This proof amounts to a demonstration. How could an anonymous writer a thousand years later use foreign words which in his day had long since passed into oblivion?

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

On these Dr. C. H. Irwin says: "As to the plagues which preceded the Exodus (chapters 7 to 11), Petrie shows that they were in the natural order of such troubles on a lesser scale in the Egyptian seasons. This in itself is an additional confirmation of the biblical references to Egypt. The river turned to blood with fish dying, was the unwholesome Nile at its lowest, when it is red and swarming with organisms. The frogs abound after the inundation has come in July. The plague of insects,

murrain, and boils belong to the hot summer and damp, unwholesome autumn. The rain and hail come in January. The locusts come in the spring over the green crops about February. The sandstorms bring a thick darkness that may be felt in March, when the hot winds break, and the last plague, the death of the first-born, was at the exodus in April. An appeal based upon these troubles would, Petrie thinks, be naturally refused on the ground that such plagues were to be expected at those seasons." As in the case of the drying up of the Red Sea and the River Jordan, the divine miracle is to be seen in the fact that these events happened just when it was foretold they would happen.

THE HORNET—WHAT WAS IT?

When God sought to animate the courage and strengthen the faith of the Israelites for their invasion and conquest of Canaan, He promised, among other things, that He would send the "hornet" before them. "I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite from before thee" (Exodus 23:28). "Moreover, the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves, perish from before thee" (Deuteronomy 7:20 R.V.). And after the conquest had been made Joshua reminds the people, "And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, . . . not with thy sword nor with thy bow" (Joshua 24:12). What was this "hornet"?

Let us go back a little. Several writers, especially Professor Sayce ("The Hittites," pp. 22—), show from the evidence of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets that while Moses was a shepherd in Midian God was preparing the way for Israel's entrance into Canaan. For at this time there was bitter war between the Hittite empire from the Taurus Mountains in the north and Egypt in the south, and their common battle-ground was Palestine. In this way the nations of Canaan were weakened both from north and south. The chief result of this war "was to bring ruin and disaster upon the cities of the Canaanites. Their land was devastated by the hostile armies which traversed it, their towns were sacked. . . . We can understand now why they

offered so slight a resistance to the invading Israelites. The exodus took place shortly after the death of Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the oppression (who principally waged this war), and when Joshua entered Palestine he found there a disunited people and a country exhausted by the long and terrible wars of the preceding century."

Turning now to Professor Garstang's recent book, "The Foundations of Bible History—Joshua and Judges" (published 1931), after describing in detail the heavy tribute levied upon the nations of Canaan by the Egyptians, he says: "So long as the reign of terror continued and Egyptian troops passed to and fro, the situation of the inhabitants was not helpless; but on the day when the (Egyptian) soldier should be withdrawn, and the land despoiled, its fortresses dismantled, its population diminished, what would be its fate? British people know that when the Roman legions were withdrawn from this island . . . the 'wails of the Britons' went up in vain. Those who were waiting an opportunity upon its frontiers broke through its enfeebled ramparts and established themselves in the land. In Syria the sequel was much the same. . . . Egypt had aimed at securing the servitude of the Canaanite cities by a consistent policy of tyranny and spoliation . . . and had now left them to their fate before the advancing Hittites and the Habiru (Hebrews)." Garstang then adds that the symbol of the sovereign power of Egypt was "The Hornet," the wasp or bee, and this, depicted in Egyptian sculpture, forms the frontispiece of his book. In this way God had sent the "hornet"—that is, the Egyptian armies—before Israel, and in this way their conquest had been prepared.

THE JORDAN CROSSED

"When the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the water," we read in Joshua 3:15-16 R.V. "the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those that went down toward the Salt Sea were wholly cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho." Of the same incident Sir Charles Marston writes in his book "The New Knowledge About the Old Testament" (published 1933): "The

site of the city Adam is the modern El Damieh about 16 miles above Jericho. There the Jordan flows through high clay banks, which are subject to landslides. During the earthquakes of 1927 these banks collapsed, and so dammed the river that no water flowed down for more than twenty-one hours. Here we have a repetition of that described in the text quoted above, and that in our own time, and associated with seismic disturbances." In the plagues of Egypt God made use of a natural phenomenon, so here the miraculous interposition of His hand was seen in that it synchronised with obedience to His command.

THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELL DOWN

Who has not wondered at the falling of Jericho's wall at the blast of priestly rams' horns? God has ever used the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish to confound the wise. It is an instance, of which there are many in the Bible, where all the intermediate links in the chain of causation are omitted and only the first and the last are mentioned: in this case God and the falling of the wall. The recent labours of archæology can now, however, fill in the intermediate links. As we would expect, negative criticism, in order at any cost to dispense with God and the miraculous, had resort to its favourite theory of "a pious fraud." (We hope the inventors of "pious frauds" were better than their theories.) They said that Joshua had undermined the wall, and supported it temporarily with timber, which on the seventh day he caused to be set on fire. Most ingenious, but not ethically very exalted!

Of this Sir Charles Marston tells us that the excavations in 1932 under Professor Garstang "exploded this theory." "The excavations," he says, "revealed the fact that the walls themselves did, on the whole, justify their place in our imagination. They consisted of two parallel walls built of sun-dried bricks. The outer wall was six feet thick and the inner one about double that width. Both appear to have been about thirty feet high, with fifteen feet space between them. These formidable defences were somewhat faulty in construction. The bricks were sun-dried and contained no binding straw. . . . Again, the foundations consisted of

several layers of stones . . . which were also of different sizes, and were not evenly laid. . . . Across or astride these great parallel walls houses had in places been built, which thus linked them together." Of Rahab's house we read, "Her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall" (Joshua 2:15). Sir Charles continues: "The walls had fallen outwards quite flat in various places, particularly on the west side of the city. In 1932 a thorough examination of the outer wall disclosed the fact that it had either slipped or been pushed over the brink on which it stood. The debris . . . was cleared away. . . . It was then found that the striations (strata) of the natural soil both under the foundations and under the surface on which the walls fell were unbroken and undisturbed from below. . . . The unsatisfactory character of the foundations on which the walls stood and the defective nature of the brickwork as revealed in portions of the walls still standing no doubt contributed to the catastrophe, while the fact that the walls were tied together by the houses built astride them linked them in simultaneous downfall."

JERICHO'S ONLY GATE

The narrative of Joshua's sending of the two spies to Jericho conveys the impression that the city had but one gateway. "It came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark . . . and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate" (Joshua 2:5, 7). "The excavations," Marston says, "that have been made suggest that this assumption is correct. No gateway has been found in the walls that have been uncovered on the west, north, or south sides of the city. On the other hand, a gate tower has been unearthed on the east side (facing the Jordan)." And Sir Charles adds: "A good example of critical methods and conclusions may be quoted in connection with this incident. 'That the wall fell down flat is mere literary hyperbole intended to convey the completeness of the victory; and probably nobody would be more amazed than the actual writer to learn that his words were required as a point of faith to be understood literally. . . . Had the walls collapsed entirely Rahab and her household could not have escaped' (the New

Commentary, p. 194). Rahab's house was probably on a part of the wall near the recovered citadel, which did not collapse."

At every point the ruins of Jericho verify the Bible narrative, for "the further fact was revealed that Jericho had been most systematically burnt, although it had not at first been systematically plundered. There, in the houses, were found provisions such as wheat, barley, lentils, onions, dates, and pieces of dough, all reduced to charcoal by the intense heat of the conflagration, and so preserved for more than three thousand years—mute witness to the course of events attending the destruction of Jericho." Compare with this: "And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein" (Joshua 6:24). But why had the conquering Israelites left this food untouched? Compare again: "The city shall be devoted" (i.e., set apart as a sacrifice), "even it, and all that is therein, to the Lord" (Joshua 6:17, R.V.). How meticulous the accuracy of God's Word!

It is not necessary to show how Professor Garstang, on the conclusive evidence of the pottery and scarabs (signets of the reigning Pharaoh under whose sovereignty Jericho then was) fixes the date of its destruction. "They all proved to be types of the fifteenth century B.C." But many critics had said that Jericho was not taken till 600 B.C.! Professor Garstang may fittingly close the discussion of this incident: "The chronological outline (of the Bible) will be seen to fit into the known history of the period as derived from the records of Egypt . . . so detailed and reliable is their information."

JERUSALEM

Of Jerusalem Dr. C. H. Irwin in "The Bible, the Scholar and the Spade" says: "Jerusalem is one of the most convincing evidences of the historical truth of the Bible narratives. Its very existence long before the Israelites entered Caanan, its successive strata of foundations, walls, houses, telling their silent and tragic story of destructions and rebuildings, and again destructions and rebuildings, its temples, towers, gates, its surrounding hills, its flowing waters—all these bring before us in visible and tangible form the history which is so

fully unfolded in the pages of Holy Scripture." Of the many features of Jerusalem in its topography and archæology we mention the following described by Dr. Irwin: "Captain (afterwards Sir Charles) Warren discovered masons' marks in red paint, with some characters chiselled out of the stone itself, and in some of the stones at the southeast angle of the rock on which Solomon's temple was built. Mr. Deutsch, of the British Museum, examined them and said that they were marks of Phœnician masons. Some are letters, some are figures—most of them quarry marks put upon them by the masons who hewed them at the quarry, and would be intended possibly to indicate the position they would have in the wall. Mr. Deutsch said that they exactly correspond with markings which he had found on the very oldest ruins of the city of Tyre. There is evidently here more than mere coincidence with the Bible statement that the temple was built by the workmen of Hiram, King of Tyre." Compare this with the fifth chapter of 1 Kings: "And Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his servants unto Solomon."

Much exploration of Jerusalem was done by Professor Macalister under the Palestine Exploration Fund. One purpose he had in view was, once and for all, to settle the site of ancient Zion, so bringing new facts of modern observation to the interpretation of an important passage in Old Testament history. He reported the discovery of the City of David, "the stronghold of Zion," which the King took from the Jebusites, and the citadel of Millo, from which, as we read, he "built round and inward." Macalister's statement showed that the record of 2 Samuel 5:6-9, and related passages, bringing in the days of Solomon and Hezekiah, *served as a guide book* to the explorers, and from beginning to end the record was found true to the last detail of an epoch-making incident in the history of Israel.

VI

The Historicity of Daniel

"Daniel the prophet."—Our Lord Jesus Christ
(Matthew 24:15)

In the Outlook of June 11, 1934, Dr S. F. Hunter wrote: "The Old Testament book of Daniel . . . belongs to a large class of literature produced between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D."

Perhaps none of the "assured results" of destructive criticism has been as assured as this, that the book of Daniel, which professes to have been written about 600 B.C., during the time of Israel's exile in Babylon, was really written in 200 B.C. at the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. That is to say, it has become an axiom with this criticism that an anonymous writer, who wished in this way to stimulate his countrymen suffering under the tyranny of that oppressor, wrote this inspiring narrative of heroic courage, and then in order to give it prestige quietly signed Daniel's name to it.

Another "pious fraud"! The Jews themselves knew nothing about this dubious transaction from the time it allegedly occurred to the present. It was discovered a little over a hundred years ago—in Germany!

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself said nothing about this action, and He was "Very God of very God." To the book of Daniel He referred on 22 occasions, and never gave even a hint that the book was other than Daniel's. On the other hand He uttered a great principle of revelation when He said (John 14:2), "If it were not so I would have told you." We might well look askance at any teaching that reflects upon our Saviour's veracity. In judging Him, it is, like Pilate and Herod, itself judged.

As stated by Dr. Kyle, the critical reasons against the historicity of Daniel may be stated generally as follows:—

1. That Belshazzar is not mentioned by any secular historian.

2. That Nebuchadnezzar is called the father of Belshazzar.

3. That Babylon was not taken in the manner described in the book of Daniel.

4. That some of the musical instruments named in chapter 3 are Greek, and could not have been known in Babylon till after the conquests of Alexander in the fourth century B.C.

THE REPLY OF ARCHÆOLOGY

To these critical contentions we make the following reply:—

1. Of Belshazzar Dr. John R. Mackay says: "Beyond the Bible, and possibly books it influenced, the name of Belshazzar was not known. Unbelieving critics gave the name of Belshazzar as one reason why they could not accept the book of Daniel as giving true history. Ewald, one of the most distinguished of the destructive critics, thought it was a mistake for Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. But it was known that Nabonidus submitted to the Persians at the battle of Borsippa, not in Babylon. Here surely was a Biblical error!" In other words, the negative critic assumes that the Bible in these cases is untrue unless its veracity can be corroborated from external sources! How would the critic fare if he treated his friends and they treated him in this way? Would there not be some libel actions? But, because God's Word will not bring an action for libel, he invents, and others repeat these statements with impunity, for one voice can awaken many echoes, and even echoes of an echo, as Dr. Dinsdale Young reminds us. Is it any wonder that God has during these years, and has now, a controversy with His Church which so generally condones this treatment of His Word, and therefore of Himself? But the critic, when he uses a negative argument of this kind, skates on thin ice, for any day the missing name may appear, and appear outside the Scriptures. The Bible will then be vindicated, but where will the critic hide his head? This is precisely what has happened. To quote the words of Dr. C. H. Irwin, "In 1882 a cuneiform inscription, previously discovered by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam among the ruins of Babylon, was for the first time interpreted and published by Dr.

Pinches." From this it appears, says Dr. B. F. C. Atkinson, of Cambridge, that "Belshazzar was the son of King Nabonidus, and REGENT during his father's absence (at Borsippa). This accounts for his promise to make Daniel the THIRD (ruler) in importance in his kingdom. A recent book by Professor C. Dougherty (professor of Assyrian in Yale University, U.S.A.), called 'Nabonidus and Belshazzar,' proves that the book of Daniel could not have been written later than the sixth century B.C., which is the time when Daniel lived, and when it professes to have been written." Dr. Kyle publishes a prayer of Nabonidus to the moon-god on behalf of "Belshazzar, my first-born son."

2. Nebuchadnezzar was not the immediate father of Belshazzar. "By the well-known Oriental usage of those times," says Kyle, "and of all times down to the present, the words 'father' and 'son' may both denote less immediate relationship than among us, and may even be used of official precedence or succession or merely fittingly to express appearances and show courtesy where no real kinship whatever exists. Did not Elisha say of Elijah, 'My father, my father!'"

3. "Much," says Dr. Kyle, "has already become clear in the taking of Babylon (by the Persians)." He gives us in his book "The Deciding Voice of the Monuments" the course of events as described in the chronicle of Nabonidus, and then he adds: "It is evident that most of the events of the taking of Babylon as described in the Bible did take place, and there is no necessary conflict between the account of Daniel and the account by Nabonidus. . . . The archæological evidence supplements the Bible account very much, but presents nothing contrary to it and makes nothing in it improbable."

4. Of the critical argument based on the presence in the third chapter of Daniel of the names of certain Greek musical instruments Dr. Kyle writes: "Greek musical instruments with Greek names . . . have furnished very tuneful music as an accompaniment to the critical presentation of the 'apocalypse' of Daniel. But of late some very discordant notes have been detected. Some Greek archæologists now claim that there are indications that Greek music was an introduction from the East,

probably from Persia. The tendency of musical instruments to carry their names with them is well known. It is certain that there was a very wide intercourse of Greeks with other nations as early as . . . about 900 years before Nebuchadnezzar. . . There is nothing impossible in Greek minstrels themselves being present in the great orchestra of Nebuchadnezzar at his late date."

In the article on Daniel in his Dictionary of the Bible edited by Dr. John D. Davis, professor of Oriental and New Testament Literature in the Theological Seminary of Princeton, U.S.A., I find these illuminating words: "Instruments such as those described were in use in the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys in Daniel's day. Moreover, there is no question that at that time and in that region music was a feature of triumphal processions and court life. Captives from distant lands were employed to play on their own instruments of music. Ashurbanipal so used Elamites. Sennacherib carried off from Judah singing men and singing women. Of the captive Jews the songs of Zion and the music of the harp were demanded (Psalm 137:1-3). There was a sufficient intercourse also between the empires on the Tigris and the Western peoples to have led to the introduction both of the Greek instruments and their names. Assyrian kings from Sargon (722 B.C.) onward, not to speak of earlier monarchs, had led off prisoners and received tribute from Cyprus, Ionia, Lydia, and Cilicia, which were Greek lands. Nebuchadnezzar warred against the cities of the Mediterranean. It would be in accordance with custom for these conquerors to introduce Greek instruments and Greek-speaking musicians to their courts. Finally, the language of the passage is Aramaic, not Babylonian. . . . The writer of the book of Daniel is using Aramaic."

In its excellent footnote to the book of Daniel the Scofield Bible says: "From Daniel 2:4 to 4:7 the book of Daniel is written in Aramaic, the ancient language of Syria, and substantially identical with Chaldaic, the language of ancient Babylonia. . . . It has, however, seemed, with some modern exceptions, to the Hebrew and Christian scholarship of the ages an unanswerable proof rather of the Danielic authorship of the book that, living from

boyhood in a land the language of which was Chaldaic, a great part of his writing should be in that tongue. . . . The few words of Persian and Greek in like manner confirm the writer's residence at a court constantly visited by emissaries from those peoples. It is noteworthy that the Aramaic section is precisely that part of Daniel which most concerned the people among whom he lived and to whom a prophecy written in Hebrew would have been unintelligible. The language returns to Hebrew in the predictive portions, which have to do with the future of Israel." "The Hebrew of Daniel," says Delitzsch, "is closely related to that of Ezekiel," who also was resident in Babylon at that time.

In 1923 Mr. C. Boutflower published a book, "In and Around the Book of Daniel" (published by S.P.C.K.), in which he gave illustrations of Greek influence on the times in which Daniel was composed. For example, "Nebuchadnezzar drew from Ionia (A.V. Javan—i.e., Greece) Greek mercenaries to fill his armies and to cut his medallions and gems. . . . Thus were introduced into Babylon Greek names of musical instruments. . . . It is here that the critics have fallen into their own trap. Ignorant that Greek was known in Nebuchadnezzar's day, they rushed to the conclusion that Greek words in a book of Nebuchadnezzar's time spelt the influence of later Maccabean times."

One of the last places in which one would look for support for the historicity of Daniel is in the "International Critical Commentary." Needless to say, it is there only under the duress of facts which could not be answered. As one would expect, the writer of the volume on Daniel, Dr. A. J. Montgomery, approached the subject from the higher critical side. While, however, he was in the act of publishing his book, which was a full-length defence of the critical position, he received from Dr. Dougherty an advance copy in manuscript of his forthcoming work on "Nabonidus and Belshazzar" (Yale and Oxford, 1929). Unable to rewrite the whole of his book, Dr. Montgomery paused, he definitely broke for ever with the Maccabean date (200 B.C.) as regards the whole book of Daniel, and admitted that "*archæology has inspired a considerable revival of the defence of the authenticity*

of the book [Italics are Dr. Montgomery's] . . . and . . . exhibits the reaction toward recognition of a far greater amount of historical tradition in the book than the elder criticism had allowed" (p. 109). He accepts the "third century" B.C. for certain (p. 96). He would even go with Driver to the "fourth century" B.C. (p. 15). This date is, of course, fatal to their position as critics demanding the Maccabean date 200 B.C. or something like it. On pages 14, 20 he says he will go as far back as the "fifth century" B.C. That brings us to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, which immediately followed the traditional date of Daniel. And then he says that such "definite historical tradition" allows of "excellent modern scholars defending the traditional position" (pp. 67, 72, 93)! He even thinks that the Persian words in the book point back to "Babylonia," and not to Palestine, for the original compilation of the book (p. 22)!

In the New Zealand Journal of Theology for February, 1933, Dr. Hunter published an article on "Babylonia During the Latter Half of the Jewish Exile," in which he makes extended reference to the book of Daniel. In doing this he evidently had Dr. Dougherty's book before him. Of this book Dr. Atkinson, of Cambridge, as we have seen, says that it "proves that 'Daniel' could not have been written later than the sixth century B.C."—i.e. in Daniel's own time, when it professes to have been written. In his article Dr. Hunter makes no definite mention that such proof had been given. On the contrary, he scouts the historical character of Daniel. The book evidently made upon Dr. Montgomery the same impression as it did upon Dr. Atkinson. Why did it not make this impression upon Dr. Hunter?

In view of what has been adduced in this article from archæological sources, some of Dr. Hunter's conclusions are astounding. For he writes: "The impression that this chapter of Daniel [the fifth] leaves is that it was written by one who had a fairly accurate tradition of the fall of Babylon, but so long after the event that important details were forgotten. The first six chapters of Daniel belonged to an earlier book than our present Daniel (perhaps the seventh also), a story with historical foundations, written with the aim of encouraging the scattered Jews to be faithful to their religion in

their heathen surroundings. To these chapters were added the remainder by the Maccabean apocalypticist. But they need not be any more true history than any modern historical novel that more or less accurately depicts the history of its period. . . . Thus we come to the conclusion that the fifth chapter of Daniel, and with it the first four and the sixth, is no more to be accepted as historical than is an unhistorical novel of today."

A RETROSPECT

In closing what has already been written I repeat, on the authority of all those to whose books or fugitive writings I have had access, that "no monuments have been found which contravene biblical history." On the other hand most unexpected explanations have been received relative to obscure subjects, and minute corroboration has been given on points of history which could not possibly occur to any falsifier. It is a remarkable illustration of the pride of opinion that these unimpeachable proofs of the accuracy of Scripture, as against the trumpeted theories of critics, have had little apparent influence upon some of them, as they still continue to publish their exploded assumptions. In the very name of science—a word continually upon their lips—they have become discredited, for it is the glory of science to follow the teaching of fact. The man who, amidst clear light to the contrary, continues to preach or teach error is not entitled to the confidence of Christian men.

On the contrary, archæology may well be proud of, and thank God for, some of its great scholars, to whom was given the courage to change their beliefs and the candour to avow that they had done so. Such have been Professors Sayce, Hommel, Halvey, and others, who were at one time strongly enamoured of higher criticism, but abandoned it because of the overwhelming proofs of archæology. One of them, Dr. Sayce, of Oxford, wrote: "The most uncompromising opponents of the higher criticism are to be found in the ranks of the foremost students of Assyrian and Egyptian antiquity. In truth, those of us who have devoted our lives to the archæology of the ancient Oriental world have been forced back into the traditional position, though doubtless with a broader basis to stand upon,

and clearer views of the real significance of the biblical text. The assumptions and preconceptions with which the higher criticism started have been swept away, either wholly or in part." Professor Hommel, the eminent German scholar, has said with regard to the decipherments he made of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets: "They brush aside the cobweb theories of the so-called higher critics of the Pentateuch, and place us in a position from which no future attack of sceptical criticism can hope to dislodge us. The theory of higher criticism must collapse inevitably and irretrievably, and the circumstance that the critics still persist in holding their views against indisputable evidence to the contrary we can only regard as additional proof of the hopeless bankruptcy of their theories." These statements were published about 20 years ago, so that the sun has been shining for some time.

When addressing the Victoria Institute of Great Britain last year Dr. A. S. Yahuda, the famous Egyptologist, said: "It has been my aim to show that the treatment applied to the Bible, regarded as a complex of suspicious documents which can only be trusted when outside evidence is forthcoming, and even then only to such an extent as is in harmony with the tendencies of higher criticism, must be abandoned, since every discovery of ancient monuments and every new find of old records has gone to confirm the biblical records. . . . There were times, and not far distant, when biblical scholars doubted the correctness of statements found even in the book of Kings, challenging them because there was lack of evidence from the neighbouring peoples of Israel; but Assyria and Babylonia have brought to light abundant evidence in support of such historical statements. . . . All along we have new evidence of the truth of the Bible. The time may, therefore, not be far distant when the whole range of biblical history from the time of the Exodus down to the Babylonian exile will be found to be confirmed by the archæological and documentary discoveries of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia."

The Nestor of modern archæology, Professor Flinders Petrie—since honoured with a knighthood—published in the Expository Times of September, 1925 a severe judgment on

modern biblical criticism, characterising much of it as crude theorising, mere guesswork, and wild contradiction. Denial has become in this field, he said, a passion of the mind. The documentary theory of Genesis he calls a far-reaching instance of untested theorising. Alterations in text are often made "without warrant or probability, and have their root in a desire to exhibit the skill of the critic rather than the truth of the matter." The main object of criticism in reducing the age of documents is, he insists, to eliminate their claim to predictive prophecy. It is therefore based on prejudice and presupposition from the start. "But," he said, "the fact of prediction has often been confirmed." He traced back the paradoxes of the critical mind to the German thesis system, which requires something new of a candidate, to be defended by dialectic in the medieval style of the devil's advocate. "Provided something or somebody is brilliantly attacked, the candidate's ability is established. But this habit of contradiction is the greatest enemy of real advance." And one may add that it must be morally demoralising and disastrous. Such being the fountain, what can be expected of the streams that have flowed from it?

"The last conclusion of science," wrote the late Dr. Dale, "will be one with the instinctive faith of the soul."

Sir John Herschell truly said: "All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the sacred Scriptures."

"THE ANVIL OF GOD'S WORD

BY DR. JOHN CLIFFORD

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
 And heard the anvil sing the vesper chime;
 Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor
 Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.
 "How many anvils have you had?" said I,
 "To wear and batter all those hammers so?"
 "Just one," he said; then, with a twinkling eye,
 "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
 And so I thought, the anvil of God's Word
 For ages sceptic blows have beat upon;
 Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
 The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.

VII

The New Testament

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."—Our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:35).

In all that has been written in these pages I believe we have consistently found:

1. That, when subjected to a searching comparison with the results of the modern science of archæology, the Bible has been proved to be amazingly accurate. It is a trite saying that "we do not go to the Bible for history," the implication being that if we do we shall be disappointed. The man who makes such a statement should be required to give specific instances of its inaccuracy. Failing this, should he not for ever hold his peace?

2. And we have also found that the "assured results" of negative criticism have frequently been proved to be fallacious.

If these erroneous statements were even now publicly withdrawn, as they should be, and sorrow were expressed that they were ever made, what can be done to rectify the incalculable and irretrievable harm already done? For a hundred years has criticism been scattering a withering blight wherever it has gone by repeating and elaborating the Tempter's question, "Yea, hath God said?" "I have yet to find," said Mr. D. L. Moody, the eminent evangelist, "a successful worker, in the pulpit or out of it, who doubts any portion of the Bible."

Examples to establish further the two propositions stated above might be adduced almost ad infinitum; but enough has been said. I conclude with a review of

ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen criticism of the Old Testament looked fearsome enough when shrouded in comparative darkness; but when the light cast by the rising sun of archæology continued to increase the spectre was found, as we have seen,

to be an elaborate affair composed of the sticks and rags of unproved theories and unsupported pre-suppositions hostile to the Bible.

Let us now examine, however briefly, the parallel criticism of the New Testament by Baur and his Tübingen school. In the year 1835 David Strauss published in Germany his "Life of Jesus," in which he remorselessly applied his mythical theory to the whole of the gospel history. Our novelist George Eliot hardly earned the thanks of the Christian public by translating the book into English. With Strauss, however, I have here nothing to do, except to say that exactly ten years after his publication Baur published his "Paulus" (Paul). In this he assumed the theory that Paul and Peter were at the head of two rival cliques in the Apostolic Church, and that the writings of the New Testament betray a tendency toward one of these or the other. It was a case in which a pyramid of theory was made to stand upon an apex of fact, the fact being the brief and passing collision between Paul and Peter in Antioch. (Galatians 2:11).

To quote Dr. John R. Mackay, of Edinburgh: "Some ninety-three years ago F. C. Baur, followed by a number of like-minded German scholars, who became known to the world as the Tübingen school, in the interests of the Hegelian philosophy, gave his construction of New Testament literature under the assumption that there was intense antagonism between the Apostles Paul and Peter. With this touchstone (certainly, I would say, fallible) in hand, he concluded that only Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, and Revelation were genuine among the New Testament writings. The remainder of the New Testament Scriptures (he said) belonged to the middle of the second century—they were what were called 'tendency writings,' pious frauds meant to make the Church think that there never was an essential difference between Peter's and Paul's viewpoints. He was able, such was his ingenuity, to support what was at bottom a philosophical prepossession with arguments so subtle and so plausible that he swept an incredible number of scholars off their feet, and made many more feel uncomfortable. But a tide in an opposite direction soon set in. The genuineness of the New Testament as a whole is

today received with more intelligence than was the case before Baur's assault came forth."

"The first section," Dr. Mackay continues, "of the New Testament to be, so to say, rehabilitated was Luke and Acts, both as written by the companion of Paul—Luke, the physician. The four names that are chiefly associated in our minds with this work of turning back an assault that would have robbed us of Luke and Acts as divinely authoritative writings are Sir J. Smith, of Jordan Hill; Dr. Hobart, of Dublin; Sir W. M. Ramsay; and, strange to say, Von Harnack, of Berlin. . . . It is now beyond reasonable doubt established that Luke, Paul's companion, his beloved physician, one of the greatest historians of any age, wrote our third gospel and also the Acts of the Apostles. . . . In regard to the gospel of John, which the Tubingen school would date later than 150 A.D., there turned up a long-lost translation of Tatian's 'Diatessaron,' in which the opening section was found to be the 'prologue' to John's gospel. Now the 'Diatessaron' was written just about the time that Baur gave as the date of the writing of John's gospel. Yet in the 'Diatessaron' the fourth gospel is treated as a long-established authoritative volume. The Tubingen school now felt disposed to date John's gospel about 130 A.D. Then there turned up the long-lost apocryphal gospel of Peter. It was discovered that this New Testament apocryphal book could scarcely be later than 130 A.D., and yet it presupposed John's gospel. There was nothing for it but to allow that, at least in some form, the fourth gospel belonged to the first century. I am credibly informed that at this moment the occupant of F. C. Baur's chair in Tubingen actually maintains the Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel. . . . The rehabilitation of the traditional dates of the New Testament against the dates suggested by the Tubingen school is practically complete. Is it not a striking thing that what is probably the ablest vindication of the genuineness of Second Peter ever written in the English language, the one book that has been more than others spoken against, should appear over the name of the learned Dr. Bigg, in the International Critical Commentary Series, a series where, if anywhere, criticism is supposed to be abreast of the times?"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

As to the value and place of archæology in vindicating the accuracy of the Acts of the Apostles the distinguished scholar Dr. A. C. Headlam (joint author of the volume on Romans in the International Critical Commentary) says: "A great test of the accuracy of the writer in the last 12 chapters is given by *the evidence of archæology. Its strength and value are so great that we need only refer to it.* The investigations of the last twenty or thirty years (Hastings Dictionary of Bible, sixth impression, 1904) have tended more and more to confirm the accuracy of the writer. In almost every point where we can follow him, even in minute details, he is right." That is an impressive testimony. And Dr. Davis's Dictionary of the Bible declares, "The remarkable historical accuracy of the Acts has been proved by modern research (see, e.g., Ramsay's Church in the Roman Empire')."

But now, having considered the position in regard to the New Testament and to the Acts of the Apostles as a whole, let us look at

A FEW PARTICULAR EXAMPLES

Pagan Magic

Simon Magus practised magic in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:9-11). Of the general practice of magic and sorcery there is abundant evidence outside the New Testament, and the exorcists were usually Jews. "Running through all antiquity," says Deissmann, "we find that a man can be 'bound' or 'fettered' by daemonic influences. It occurs in Greek, Syrian, Hebrew, Mandaean, and Indian magic spells." The papyri contain, we are told, large numbers of spells for healing. The "books" destroyed at Ephesus (Acts 19:19) through the preaching of Paul were papyri containing magic spells. "When," says Dr. C. H. Irwin, "we look at some of such papyri which have been discovered, as, for instance, the 'Great' Magical Papyrus in the National Library at Paris or those in the British Museum which Sir Frederick Kenyon has edited, the statement of St. Luke that the value of the magical books at Ephesus was 50,000 pieces of silver [over £20,000 in New Zealand money] does not seem so incredible as it has in the past appeared to many critics."

Paul in Cyprus

Of the Apostle Paul's first missionary journey Dr. Irwin also tells us that "when Paul visited Cyprus and various cities of Asia Minor, Bishop Lightfoot, Provost Salmon, and Sir William Ramsay have found many expressions of which Roman history and local inscriptions afford striking corroboration. For instance, at Paphos, in Cyprus, the governor, Sergius Paulus, is described in our Authorised Version as 'the deputy' (Acts 13:7, 8). The Revised Version, however, more correctly translates it 'pro-consul,' which is the exact Roman title corresponding to the Greek *anthupatos* in the text. But was the governor called 'pro-consul' by the imperial authorities? Strabo says, No; he was called 'pro-praetor' (Greek *antistrategos*). This statement by Strabo was held by many to show the inaccuracy of St. Luke. But further research and modern scholarship have proved St. Luke to be right. It is in fact one of those cases in which both are true. The governors of Cyprus, as has been proved by coins and an inscription found in that island, were entitled 'pro-consul' down to and after the time of St. Paul, though prior to the time of (the Emperor) Augustus they had been called 'pro-praetor,' and the change was made by Augustus. . . . Further, the statement that Sergius Paulus was the name of the particular pro-consul is definitely proved by an inscription found at Soli, in Cyprus, which is dated 'in the pro-consulship of Sergius Paulus.'"

Paul in Thessalonica

Dr A. C. Headlam, speaking of Luke's accuracy, says: "He knows that at the time when St. Paul visited Cyprus it was governed by a pro-consul; this was the case only between the year B.C. 22 and some time early in the second century. . . . He knows that the magistrates of Philippi were called *strategoï*, and were attended by lictors, and that those of Thessalonica were called *politarchs*." It is important to notice that certain critics were quite sure they had found Luke blundering when he called the magistrates of Thessalonica (Acts 17:6) *politarchs* (rulers of the city). But, as we have seen, Luke was right, his critics wrong. The discovery of various inscriptions in which the word *politarchs* occurs has in recent years, as Dr. Milligan has said,

“triumphantly vindicated” St. Luke’s accuracy. The rock is where it was, the waves are broken.

Paul at Athens

That the Apostle Paul was familiar with Greek literature and thought we see by the quotations in his address to the Athenian philosophers. “Sir William Ramsay has noted also,” says Dr. C. H. Irwin, “the accuracy with which the writer of Acts reproduces ‘a characteristic bit of Athenian slang.’ The word translated ‘babblers’ (Acts 17:18) is *spermologos*, literally ‘a bird that picks up seeds for its food,’ and then in popular use a term applied to a retailer of borrowed sayings and usually a person of low class.” Irwin continues: “St. Paul’s acquaintance with the courtesies of Athenian life is seen in the words with which he began his address to the Council of Areopagus, ‘Andreas Athenaioi’ (Acts 17:22), ‘Gentlemen of Athens.’ It was the expression used by Demosthenes in his orations.”

It would be interesting to go on giving one instance after another of the exact confirmation of the Acts of the Apostles from the excavations at the sites of ancient Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium. In speaking of Luke’s accuracy, and in reference to St. Paul’s shipwreck on Malta, Dr. Headlam says, “It is enough, too, to refer here to the very complete investigations of the account of St. Paul’s voyage and shipwreck made by James Smith—‘Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul.’ We need not enter into details, as they are admitted.”

The Census in Luke’s Gospel

Doubt has frequently been thrown upon the historical accuracy of Luke’s statement (Luke 2:1-3) that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus for a census or enrolment (R.V.) of all the people; and that, to be enrolled, they went everyone to his own city. “Here again,” says Dr. Irwin, “a papyrus now in the British Museum comes to our help. It contains an edict of G. Vibius Maximus, governor in Egypt in 104 B.C., in the following words: ‘The enrolment by household being close at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause soever are outside their homes to return to their domestic hearths, that they may also accomplish the customary dispensation of enrolment.’ Deissmann gives evidence of many papyri showing that enrolment

(and assessment) carried out in this way was the customary practice." There was an enrolment every fourteen years.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

The seven churches of Asia (Minor) were probably established during the Apostle Paul's marvellous three years' ministry at Ephesus. To these churches our Lord send through His servant John His final message (Revelation 2 and 3). His words consist of commendation where it can be given, of warning, and of prediction as to the separate future of each. In these pages I have confined the subject to the confirmation of Scripture by the science of archæology. I would now, however, in these closing words, seek to show that archæology bears a dual witness: it witnesses to the meticulous accuracy of Scripture and it witnesses also to the exact fulfilment of the predictions of Scripture. Both of these are seen in the message sent to each of these seven churches. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Church of Ephesus

The Church of Ephesus, after a commendation of their first works, to which they are commanded to return, were accused of having left their first love, and threatened with the removal of their candlestick out of its place, except they should repent. Ephesus was the metropolis of Ionia, a great and opulent city, and the greatest emporium of Asia Minor. But it was chiefly famous for the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. Shrines of gold and silver, each of from three to seven pounds weight, have been unearthed from its ruins. The remains of its magnificent theatre, capable of seating 24,500 people, are now to be seen. But "a heap of stones and some miserable mud cottages, occasionally tenanted by Turks, without one Christian residing there, are all the remains of ancient Ephesus." They "left their first love," and their candlestick has been moved out of its place, and the great city of Ephesus is no more.

The Church of Smyrna

To the Church of Smyrna Christ addressed words of commendation and cheer. "I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art

rich—i.e., in faith and obedience). Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:9, 10). No judgment was pronounced against it, and Smyrna is today the greatest of all the cities of Anatolia. “It has justified,” says Sir William Ramsay, “the prophetic vision of the writer. It is at present the one important seaport, and will always remain the greatest seaport of the whole country.” A large city, it has several Greek (Christian) churches and an English church. The light may be dim, but the candlestick has not been removed.

The Church of Pergamos

The Church of Pergamos (Pergamum) is commended, “Thou holdest fast my name and didst not deny my faith.” But there were some in it who held doctrines and did deeds which the Lord hated, and against them stern warnings are spoken. It is not said, as of Ephesus, that their candlestick would be removed out of its place, and Pergamum has survived to this day, now under the name of Bergama. Of the expression “Satan’s seat” Dr. Charles says, “It is here and nowhere else that we are to find the explanation of the startling phrase, ‘the throne or seat of Satan.’ Behind the city in the first century rose a huge conical hill, 1000 feet high, covered with heathen temples and altars, . . . which appeared to the seer as the throne of Satan, since it was the home of many idolatrous cults, but, above all, of the imperial cult.” This was the worship of the emperors Augustus, Tragan, and Severus. To refuse to make sacrificial offerings to the emperor as to Deity was to incur the punishment of death or banishment. Pergamos still contains at least 15,000 people, of whom 1500 are Greek Christians and 200 Armenians, and each of these bodies has a church.

The Church of Thyatira

Like the church at Pergamos, in that at Thyatira there was good, but with it evil was mingled, and He Who had eyes like unto a flame of fire discerned both. “I know thy works and charity and service and faith, and thy patience.” But along with these there was the canker of licentiousness and heathen idolatry. Space to repent was given or

tribulation was threatened. "But to the rest in Thyatira—as many as have not known the depths of Satan—I will put upon you, saith the Lord, none other burden." Once a famous city, famous for its manufacture of "purple" cloth, the city from which Lydia came, Paul's first convert in Philippi and in Europe, it still exists while greater cities have fallen. It is now called Ak-hissar, a large town of mud houses, with ruins of temples and broken columns.

The Church of Sardis

Of the Church of Sardis the Lord said, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." The city was great, the church was founded by an apostle, and yet the most that the Lord could say of it was that there were a few in it whose garments were undefiled. The picture is dark. The church was one in name only. "Pagan corruption triumphed. Cybele, with her Bacchic rites and worship of lust, was the patron deity of what was one of the great cities of the past." "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." "Be watchful," the Lord said, "and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die"; but the loving word of warning went unheeded. Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was a great and renowned city, where the wealth of Cræsus, its king, was accumulated and became even a proverb. But "Sardis is now a wilderness of ruins and thorns, a few wretched mud huts scattered among the ruins, and a few Turkish herdsmen its only inhabitants. No Christians reside on the spot."

The Church of Philadelphia

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things saith He that is holy, He that is true . . . I know thy works." And there were words of encouragement, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast not denied My name." There was the gracious promise, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." Like His threatenings the Lord's promises are sure. Philadelphia in the fourteenth century long withstood the power of

the Turks, and, in the words of Gibbon, "at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia. Philadelphia is still erect, a column in a scene of ruin." A Christian missionary a hundred years ago wrote of it, "Christianity is here more flourishing than in many other parts of the Turkish Empire . . . there is still a numerous Christian population. Divine service is performed every Sunday in five churches." From His excellent glory our Lord said of this church, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God," and Philadelphia, when all else fell around it, "stood erect," the sceptical Gibbon himself being our witness—a pillar, "a column in a scene of ruin."

The Church of Laodicea

And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness . . . I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm [tepid], and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich. . . ." All other of the seven churches were found worthy of some commendation, but of approval for the church of Laodicea there was not one word. "A man of Laodicea," says Dr. Keith in "Keith on the Prophecies." "could calmly count his even pulse and think his life secure while death was preying on his vitals." Laodicea was the metropolis of Greater Phrygia, an extensive and very celebrated city. It had at this time risen to the height of its eminence. "It was the mother church of sixteen bishoprics." It had three theatres and an immense circus capable of containing 30,000 spectators—a city of pleasure. And now it has been blotted from the world, "utterly desolated, and without any inhabitant, except wolves and jackals and foxes." It has no human inhabitants except when a few wandering Bedouin pitch their brown tents amid its ruins.

At the close of his book Dr. C. H. Irwin says:

“From Genesis to Revelation we have thus found a record of human life and the history of nations through the centuries, confirmed by contemporary monuments and writings. Many empires have risen, flourished, and fallen, but God’s Word endures. And in times of scepticism and unbelief buried records have been brought to light and forgotten nations whose very existence was questioned have been re-discovered. Science, anthropology, philology, and archæology have all thrown light upon the historic truth of the Scriptures. When we find the Bible true in its history, we learn to trust it when it speaks to us on the matters of the soul.” How marvellous it is that in these times our Lord’s words are being literally fulfilled, “I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.” “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

CONCLUSION

Argument and demonstration may confirm, they cannot create faith. As the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, only He can interpret it to the heart, and it is His alone prerogative to seal it upon the soul as no other and no less than the Word of a God with Whom it is impossible to lie.

In closing I quote the third question of our Larger Catechism, “How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?” and give its matchless answer, “The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God.” Be ours the psalmist’s prayer, “Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law,” and ours to believe and claim the Lord’s promise, “He [the Holy Spirit] will teach you all things. He will guide you into all truth.”



The
Evangelical Bible League
of Otago

Objects :

1. To bear united witness to the faith of the Members in the whole Bible as the inspired, veracious and inerrant Word of God, and to affirm its Divine authority and sole sufficiency as the supreme rule of faith and practice.

2. To promote the reverent study of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in prayerful dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and to show the interrelation of their various parts, thus making the Bible its own interpreter.

3. To present evidence of the truth and power of evangelical Christianity in such a way as to clarify the mind and strengthen the faith of those in perplexity and doubt.

4. To confess the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ, and to promote fellowship, brotherly love, and co-operation among its members.

5. To unite in a fellowship of service those who accept the doctrinal basis of the League.

6. To instruct and encourage those who are desirous of entering into fuller knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and service for Him.

7. To encourage circulation of sound literature on fundamentals of the faith, and to compile from time to time a select list of books to meet present day difficulties.

8. To provide opportunities for instruction in Scriptural truth by arranging public meetings, lectures and Bible readings.

9. To encourage missionary enterprise and all missionaries who are faithful to the Inspired Word and to those evangelical truths herein recited, which, by the blessing of God have so changed the hearts and lives of people in all lands.

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