

God Speaks To Modern Man

all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:27.

In these words it is made unmistakably clear that from beginning to end the Scriptures brought revelations concerning Christ.

It was Christ who from the bush Moses saying, I AM THAT I AM. “Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Savior, is God ‘manifest in the flesh.’ 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says, “I AM, the Good Shepherd.” I AM the living Bread.” I AM the way, the Truth, and the Life.” “ALL power is given unto ME in’ heaven and in earth.” [John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18.] I AM the assurance of every promise.” “I AM; be not afraid.” “God with us’ is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.” - *The Desire’ of Ages*, pp. 24, 25.

The Bible reveals the Man, and when men find the Man everything else will come out all right.

Have you found the Man of the Book? Have you made Him your Savior, your Friend, your Pattern, your Power?

The Man of the Book is your Friend. Faith in this Man is nourished by the Book. Stay close to the Man. Stay close to the Book. “This Book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this Book.” The secret of your perfection (2 Timothy 3:17) lies in your submission to, and association with, the perfect Man and the perfect Book.

“O Word of God Incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky, We praise Thee for Thy radiance That from the hallowed page, A lantern to our
footsteps, Shines on from age to age.

“It is the golden casket, Where gems of truth are stored; It is the heaven-drawn picture Of Christ, the living
Word.

“O teach Thy wandering pilgrims By this their path to trace, Till, clouds and darkness ended, They see
Thee face to face.”
-W. W. How

16. Is the History of the Bible True?

DID you know that when George Washington was President of the United States there was nothing definitely known, aside from the Bible, concerning the history of peoples of the world prior to the date 400 BC, the date of the oldest reliable histories of Greece and Rome? In other words, at the time George Washington died there was not a single document known to be in existence that was written in the time of Old Testament history. Therefore the Old Testament had no witnesses to call to its aid when its statements of historical fact were challenged. Yet there was the Bible, claiming to give the history of the world back, not to four hundred years, but to four thousand years before Christ.

HISTORIANS QUESTIONED BIBLE HISTORY

Historians, with no evidence from other sources to support the Bible, raised questions as to the reliability of Biblical history. Scoffers pointed in scorn to stories of men and nations that they claimed never existed. Militant skeptics shot their arrows of unbelief, thinking that they could inflict a mortal wound on God’s living Word. If the Bible record of Israel and the nations were true, why was there no other record of the same happenings? They asked. And they boldly assumed that because the Bible record stood alone it was most likely false.

Furthermore, they said that the art of writing was a comparatively modern art; therefore, the supposed records of Moses, for instance, could not be reliable, for the simple reason that people did not know how to write in Moses’ day-fifteen hundred years before Christ, or some thirty-five hundred years ago. So they set later dates for these writings. They had particular objection to the book of Daniel, claiming

that it was written long after the time of Babylon and Medo-Persia.

A THING OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

To those of us who believe the Bible, and its representation of God as one who definitely has something to do with the affairs of men, it seems a thing of divine providence that during the very time when the reliability of the Bible is questioned, great and notable discoveries have been and are being made which testify to the accuracy of the Bible record. The spade, pick, and shovel have unearthed the remains of ancient nations before known only in Bible history.

Mark B. Chapman says, "Great mounds that had lain untouched for millenniums have been dug up and thoroughly examined, and amid the debris of these buried and forgotten ruins have been found not only the remains of palaces, temples, monuments, and great buildings, but immense libraries, inscribed bricks, vases, tablets, and mural inscriptions, which have given us the history and chronology of those ancient and almost unknown people, with their manners and customs, their social surroundings and scientific knowledge, and their very thoughts and emotions." *Mounds, Monuments, and Inscriptions*, pp. 9, 10. The history thus dug from the earth itself has borne mute but abundant testimony that the Bible record is reliable.

Another writer has said: "It must be accounted a wonderful providence of God that, at a time when so much is being said and done to discredit the Old Testament, so marvelous a series of discoveries, bearing directly on matters contained in its pages, should have been made." - JAMES ORR, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (Scribners), p. 396. This investigation of ancient ruins is known as archeology. The leading countries of the world have societies organized to carry on this work. In the light of discoveries made, Dr. Robert D. Wilson, professor of Semitic philology in Princeton Theological Seminary, said, "I have come to the conclusion that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament. Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible in the original texts have stood the test."

THREE CLASSES OF ANCIENT WRITINGS

According to Prof. W. W. Prescott, author of *The Spade and the Bible*, the ancient writings that have been unearthed fall into three general classes: the inscriptions, the papyri, and the ostraca.

The inscriptions include writings that have been found inscribed upon metal, stone, wood, or clay. One writer says, "The bulk of the inscriptions are on stone, but to these must be added inscriptions cast or engraved in bronze or scratched on tablets of lead or gold, a few wax tablets, the scribblings (graffiti) found on walls, and the texts on coins and medals." - *The Spade and the Bible*, p. 19. There are hundreds of thousands of these inscriptions. The best known of these are the Moabite stone, the Rosetta stone, and the Behistun inscription, of which more will be said later.

Then there are the writings on papyrus, or the paper of those days. This paper was made of the pith of the papyrus plant, the method originated in Egypt. Milligan says: "The pith (byblos) of the stem was cut into long strips, which were laid down vertically to form a lower or outer layer. Over this a second layer was then placed, the strips this time running horizontally. And then the two layers were fastened together and pressed to form a single web or sheet (kollēma), the process being assisted by a preparation of glue moistened, where possible, with the turbid water of the Nile, which was supposed to add strength to it. After being dried in the sun, the surface was carefully rubbed down with ivory or a smooth shell, and was then ready for writing." - GEORGE MILLIGAN, *Selections From the Greek Papyri*, Introduction, pp. xxi, xxii. (Copyright, 1910. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.)

A long sheet could be made by fastening many sheets together to produce the roll spoken of in the Bible. The ink used, even in the days of the disciples, was made of soot, mixed with gum, and diluted with water. A color, which had a wonderful lasting power, was thus produced, as may be seen by examining any of the recently recovered texts." PRESCOTT, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

"The great bulk of the papyri," according to those who know, "are of the nonliterary character: as legal documents of the most various kinds, e.g., leases, accounts, receipts, marriage contracts and wills, attestations, official edicts, petitions for justice, records of judicial proceedings, and a large number of documents relating to taxes, then letters and notes, exercise books, charms, horoscopes, diaries, etc., etc. They enable us to revive a long period of ancient life." - *Ibid.*, p. 23.

The third class of writings, which has thrown light on the lives of ancient people and has been especially helpful in understanding New Testament Greek, is known as ostraca—broken pieces of pottery found in the rubbish heaps of many cities. They were used by the poorer classes of the people in place of the papyrus which was more expensive.

The notes on these broken pieces of pottery are naturally briefer, but they give us an insight into the lives of the poorer classes.

Now, it is evident that with all these thousands and thousands of inscriptions, whether on wood, stone, metal, papyrus, pottery, clay, brick, walls, or whatnot, we could gather no information unless we could decipher them to know their meaning. No living person knew how to read them.

So we turn to the fascinating story of how three stones yielded their secret to the perseverance of men, and unlocked the ancient languages to us, uncovering evidence in support of the history of the Bible. As long as we live there will always be room for doubt, but God provides ample evidence for us to believe. The Christ of your Bible is the Christ of a Book that has stood the storms of the ages. If you will accept Him and build on His Word, your Christian character building will withstand every wind, storm, and flood of doubt, destruction, grief, and temptation.

17. When Stones Speak

JESUS CHRIST rode toward the city of Jerusalem, accompanied by a triumphal procession, which grew larger and still larger as He neared the city. There went up a continual shout, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 21:9. Many Pharisees witnessing the scene sought to turn the current of popular feeling. They pressed through the crowd to Jesus, who was the object of the people’s acclaim, and said to Him, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.” Luke 19:39. Jesus replied, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Verse 40. When the time comes for God’s plans to be carried out, they will be carried out, though perhaps not by the ones who should be expected to do it.

Our attention turns to the story about how three ancient stones gave up their secret, unlocking the old languages of Egypt and Babylonia, thus enabling men to decipher the writing found on metal, stone, wood, and pottery of millenniums ago.

You have all heard of Napoleon Bonaparte, that extraordinary light of military genius that flashed on the world, glowed brilliantly, and suddenly went out in darkness. Napoleon, impelled by dreams of conquest and glory, led a French expedition into Egypt in 1798. With him and his four hundred transport ships were not only his brilliant generals and thirty-eight thousand men but more than one hundred distinguished scholars, scientists, artists, and engineers. In fact, the work of these one hundred men was to be of far greater value to the world than the battles of his army.

THE ROSETTA STONE

The following year, 1799, one of these men was doing some digging not far from the mouth of the river Nile, near the town of Rosetta, in Egypt. There he found a “strange looking granite stone. It was nearly four feet tall, about two and one-half feet wide, and nearly a foot thick. One face of the stone was smooth, and was divided into three parts, one above the other, and upon each part was an inscription. The inscription on the lowest portion was in Greek, and so could be read by the scholars, but the characters on the other two portions were strange and meaningless to them.” Prescott, *The Spade and the Bible*, p. 25.

Nearly twenty years passed by before any adequate attempt was made to find the meaning of the two strange inscriptions. Finally a Frenchman by the name of Champollion set himself to the task. He proceeded on the theory that all three inscriptions actually said the same thing. The Greek inscription he could read, of course. But to prove that the other two should be read with the same meaning was not so easy, he found. For four years he labored before he could announce to the world that he had deciphered the mysterious writing on the stone.

One of the inscriptions proved to be the ancient picture writing of Egypt, the hieroglyphic, and the other a later form of picture writing known as the demotic. The discovery of this Frenchman made it possible for men to read the thousands of inscriptions found upon monuments, tombs, and tablets throughout Egypt. Thus was brought to light testimony to support the records of the Bible. This stone was