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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: The Bible and the Spade

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The Bible And The Spade

JAMES D. WILLEFORD

No. 99

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At one time during the close of Christ's personal ministry he rode into Jerusalem on a colt, and as he went the people cried, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Lk. 19:38-40). The Lord has so arranged matters that when the leaders of men reject his word as testimony, the stones do cry out. In our day the stones, the monuments, and the clay tablets which are being unearthed by means of the spade are testifying to the historical accuracy of the Bible. Scholars say, "Archaeological research has resulted in the verification of the Biblical account of many historical events." (*The New Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia*, p. 1304, Vol. IV.) Thus the testimony of the pick and spade is confirming the Bible every day and putting the infidel and modernist to flight. There is harmony between the Bible writers of old, and the archaeologists of today. The prophets said thousands of years ago, "This will come to pass; this will befall this people, city or nation," and archaeologists, laboring centuries later say, "This did come to pass." The stones are crying out, and the voices that have been sleeping for centuries in the sands of Egypt, Palestine and Syria are swelling into a unified chorus in vindication of the Bible as the word of God. These crying stones are sweeping the sandy foundation from under Infidelity and Modernism.

There are many stories, events and people set forth in the Bible which for many years were denied by all Modernists. They lectured throughout our land and ridiculed such "legends," as they termed them, but do you know that they do not take such an attitude today toward many of those things. They would be laughed to shame to deny these events and stories today. Why is this true? Is it because they suddenly decided to change? Did they turn to God and acknowledge Him? No, they are abandoning their former positions because of the crying stones; the testimony of the pick and spade. Archaeology has confirmed the Bible account of events and people, and the Modernists have ceased to scoff at things which the archaeologists say are accurate in every way.

For many years atheists denied that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. They claimed that writing had not been invented in Moses' day. But again the lowly spade refuted the atheist and vindicated the Bible. In 1887 the Tel-el-Amarna tablets were discovered in Egypt, and they demonstrate that people were writing seven hundred years before Moses. Sir Frederick Kenyon says, "One fact, however,

is quite clear—namely, that when the Hebrews left Egypt they left a country in which writing had been freely practised for many centuries; and if Moses was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians' he was certainly well acquainted with writing." (*The Bible and Archaeology*, p. 211.) Archaeologists tell us that they found thirty thousand clay tablets in one ancient city of Babylonia on which were written accounts and contracts dating from 3000 B.C. What does the critic say NOW who once maintained there was no such thing as writing in the time of Moses? As in many other instances he is put to silence, thanks to the discoveries of archaeology.

For many years Modernists have tried to array historical facts against the Bible. This has been true regarding the kings mentioned in the Bible. Among the hundreds of kings listed as ruling in various countries there were forty-seven names the historians could not find in secular history. All the others mentioned in the Bible were mentioned in secular history. But histories written by men made no mention of these 47, and it was argued from this that the Bible could not be correct. It was said the Bible account of these men was legendary and mythical. The answer had to await the pick and the spade of the archaeologists. When that answer was given it was undeniable. One by one, tablets manuscripts, and stones were laid bare until NOT A SINGLE ONE of these forty-seven kings was unaccounted for in the records left by the VERY PEOPLE OVER WHOM THEY REIGNED. Again the Bible was proved to be historically correct as the stones cried out in its vindication.

In Isa. 20:1 the writer says Sargon was king of Assyria, but for many years historians denied this inasmuch as he could not be found in all the records of secular history. Bible critics said he was the creation of a mad-man who thought he was inspired. But now, through the work of archaeologists, we know all about Sargon, even to the dates and deeds of his reign. In 1842 the archaeologists of the French Government uncovered the ruins of a great temple, the buildings and ground of which covered twenty-five acres, and to their amazement they had uncovered the ruins of the temple of Sargon who is mentioned by Isaiah as king of Assyria. (*Archaeology and Bible History*, J. P. Free, pp. 200, 201.) Mr. George Barton of the University of Pennsylvania said of Sargon: "His name had so entirely disappeared from ancient literature that only one reference to him had survived; that in Isa. 20:1, but here was his palace arising from the dust together with abundant annals of his reign." (*Archaeology and the Bible*, Geo. A. Barton, p. 34.)

No book of the Bible had been denied and derided by atheists as much as the book of Daniel until archaeology proved its truthfulness. The reason for their derision of Daniel was that the book says Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon, but the historians said the king of Babylon was Nabonidus. Sir Henry Rawlinson discovered in some Chaldean cities cylinders which told this story. Nabonidus was the last king but when Babylon fell he was away and his son reigned

YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS

[illegible]

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.

in his place. That is why Belshazzar promised Daniel he could be third in the kingdom and not second. His father was first, he second, and Daniel could be third. (*Archaeology and Bible History*, J. P. Free, p. 234.) The lowly pick and spade have vindicated the Bible statements and now they cannot be denied. The Bible is truly the word of God.

Herodotus was a Greek historian, born in 464 B. C. He stated in his history of Egypt that the Egyptians grew no grapes and used no wine. But in the Bible Moses mentioned growing of grapes in Egypt and the use of wine. The historian said they did not grow in Egypt; the Bible said they did. The enemies of the Bible all stood by Herodotus. They said this proved the Bible to be untrue. Centuries rolled on and the doubters continued to point to the mistakes of Moses, but recently in the excavations of Egypt, works of Egyptian artists were found which depict the Egyptian wine-makers at work. Vineyards and clusters of grapes are shown under the care of the Egyptian farmer in the days when the world was young. This proved conclusively that the Bible was right, and the secular historians were wrong.

For years all the skeptics and Modernists scorned the idea of the existence of the Hittite people mentioned forty-two times in the Bible. They said the account of these people was invented by the Bible writers. No record of the Hittites could be found in all the histories of men. They said it might be understandable how a city like Ninevah could be lost and forgotten but that an entire nation should be completely lost seemed unbelievable. Of course, the Bible had much to say about the Hittites, but the critics did not believe the Bible. But again the Bible was demonstrated to be right and the critics wrong. The archaeologists have even discovered the Hittites' capitol city, and much of their history has been brought to light including their dealings with the Israelites. Sir Frederick Kenyon says, "The Hittites, their history, their laws, and even their myths, have emerged from the obscurity of the ages." (*The Bible and Archaeology*, p. 279.) Another great archaeologist says of the Hittites: "They had the good fortune to have their names preserved in the most immortal literature in the world, the Bible." (*Archaeology and the Bible*, Geo. A. Barton, p. 92.) (Cf. *Archaeology and Bible History* by J. P. Free, p. 125, 126.) Thus the spade has again silenced the Bible critic and added luster to the book itself.

The Bible story of Jericho finds interesting confirmation in archaeology. Sir Chas. Marston and Prof. J. Garstang have been excavating this city since 1929. They tell us it once had huge walls with buildings across the top of them. They tell us the walls fell and the city was destroyed by fire of unusual intensity. But the Bible tells these very things. It even gives the name of Rahab whose house was upon the wall of the city, and the Bible declares the city was burned with fire. Archaeologists tell us the walls of Jericho fell by some violent convulsion, and the Bible has told us for thirty-five centuries that God cast the walls down. Prof. Garstang asks: "For what reader

will suppose that the walls of Jericho fell by the hand of man?" (*The Story of Jericho*, by John Garstang, p.170.) He also says, "One conclusion indeed seems certain: the power that could dislodge hundreds of tons of masonry in the way described must have been superhuman." (Ibid. p. 138.) Prof. Garstang continues, "the destruction of the Fourth City corresponds in all material particulars with the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Jericho before the Israelites under Joshua." (Ibid. p. 142.) It should be evident to all of us why the archaeologists say the Bible is historical and that the events recorded therein truly transpired.

One of the most interesting studies in the light of modern archaeology is the story of the people of Israel in Egyptian bondage. This story was scoffed at for centuries by the enemies of the Bible. They said it was a Jewish fable and legend to create the impression that God had been good to them in a special way by delivering them out of slavery. They said the Jews were never in Egyptian bondage since history does not record it. However, in recent years they have been forced to admit as true what once denied. Archaeology has fully confirmed the Bible account. The Scriptures tell us that while in Egypt the Israelites were forced to build cities for the Egyptians and some of these very cities have been found by the pick and spade. Two of the cities built by the Israelites were Pithom and Raamses. In 1886 the first of these was uncovered and a short time later the other was discovered. When the Israelites began building these cities they were furnished with straw by the Egyptians, but later Pharaoh, in order to impose a greater burden upon them, refused to provide the straw and they were told they would have to obtain it as best they could. In the ruins of these old cities this very thing is confirmed. The lower courses of brick contain straw, and courses a bit higher contain very little straw. In these latter courses, the brick contain grass roots, twigs and stubble. After hearing of this archaeological discovery, one should get his Bible and read Exodus 5, and he will learn just what happened 3500 years ago in Egypt. (*Archaeology and Bible History*, by J. P. Free, p. 85.)

One of archaeology's greatest services has been to prove that we have the original texts of the Bible. Occasionally we hear people ask, "Can we be sure we have the Bible as it was first given?" Sir Frederick Kenyon says, "The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." (*The Bible and Archaeology*, Sir Frederick Kenyon, p. 289.) Another archaeologist says, "the certainty with which the text of the New Testament is established exceeds that of any other ancient book." (*Light from the Ancient East*, by Jack Finegan, p. 352.)

The verdict of the men with the spade is, "Archaeology has not yet said its last word; but the results already achieved con-

firm what faith would suggest, that the Bible can do nothing but gain from an increase of knowledge." (*The Bible and Archaeology*, Sir Frederick Kenyon p. 279.) One scholar has said "All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths that come from on high and are contained in the sacred writings." (Sir John Herschel; quoted by Solomon Goldman in *The Book of Books*, p. 293.)

Atheists may rage, and skeptics may scoff, but the Bible will stand. It cannot be destroyed by the puny efforts of men. The indestructibility of God's word is well expressed by John Clifford in his poem: THE BIBLE. In this poem he said:

"Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring 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 these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'
"And, so I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon,
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone."

The Bible is not the book of the month, or even the book of the year. It is the book of the ages. This book is open before you today that you may obey its message. One day you will face an open Bible again, and at that time you will be judged by it. So, will you not listen to the Bible's message of redeeming love through a crucified and risen Christ? Will you not believe in one who loved you so, and will you not turn to Him for refuge? He pleads for your life for it is precious to Him, and it should be to you. The Savior asks you to become His by being baptized into Him for the remission of your sins. (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38.) When God spoke to Abraham the Bible says, "By faith he obeyed." (Heb. 11:8.) Will you not follow in the steps of Abraham and do God's will today?

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