

2.—WHAT THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY CRITICS SAID

Among the claims of the radical Bible critics were the following:

- (1) That the first five books of the Bible must have been written centuries later than Moses, because writing was not known in his day (approx. 1400 B.C.).
- (2) That the Ten Commandments could not have been written in Moses' day. Such advanced and humane laws must have been the product of a much later era.
- (3) That early Bible characters such as Abraham and Joseph were only legendary or mythical heroes, who never had any real historical existence.
- (4) That the Hebrew religion was man-made, not God-given, and was largely borrowed from some of the surrounding nations.
- (5) That the Bible blundered badly when it ranked the Hittite nation with the power of ancient Egypt. The Hittites, claimed the critics, were at the most only a second-rate power.
- (6) That the book of Daniel does not give a true picture of the customs or history of ancient Babylon; hence it must be a fiction of much later composition.
- (7) That the New Testament does not give an accurate picture of the Greco-Roman world of the first century. Therefore it, too, must have been produced much later than it claims.

One by one, during the past one hundred years, the teeth of these criticisms have been effectively drawn. These sceptical conjectures have now been proved so absurd that we cannot mention them without a smile!

3.—THE BIRTH OF GOD'S LATEST CHAMPION—ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology—the scientific study of the material remains of the ancient past—is one of the youngest of the sciences, being only about 170 years old. It was born on the banks of the Nile in 1798, when Napoleon included a large group of French artists and scholars in his expeditionary force to Egypt. In that year the restless, curious, modern world came face to face with the faded but still majestic world of the ancient past. Napoleon's companions stood awed and wondering in the presence of mummies and monuments which rose to greet them from the dust of antiquity. Their fingers itched to unravel the story of the mystic past.

Many years were to pass before the scattered remnants of that story could be patiently pieced together and read, but the antiquarian fever was abroad. English, German and American scholars were soon to come under its spell, and Modern Archaeology was on the way!

4.—THE FINDING OF THE LONG-LOST KEYS

The major obstacle to success was the language problem. Ancient Egyptian, Babylonian and Persian had not been spoken or written for over 2,000 years. So, before modern scholars could decipher the records of the ancient world, they had to find the "keys" to these long-dead languages. The story of how the keys were found has all the excitement of a modern detective thriller!

The first key was the famous **Rosetta Stone**, which is now preserved in the British Museum. This slab of black basalt, with its neat rows of writing, was discovered at Rosetta, near the western mouth of the Nile, by a French military engineer named Broussard, in 1799. It contains one decree, promulgated in 196 B.C., and written in three languages—Egyptian picture-writing (hieroglyphics); common Egyptian (demotic); and Greek. The Greek inscription provided the clue to the other two panels. Aided by this key, scholars were enabled to unlock the priceless historical and literary treasures of the ancient Pharaohs.