

**(7) Dramatic Corroboration of New Testament History**

An unfriendly critic of the book of Acts once described it as "a tissue of blunders of the worst kind". The man who probably did most to reverse such ill-considered opinions was the English scholar, Sir William Mitchell Ramsay. Beginning his investigations as a convinced and powerfully fortified sceptic, Ramsay decided to go personally to Asia Minor and attempt to follow in the footsteps of Paul, expecting to find that the New Testament historian was mistaken at point after point. To his astonishment, he found that Luke was invariably right! The more closely Ramsay pursued his investigations, the more the evidence accumulated to vindicate the New Testament record. So overwhelming was this evidence that Ramsay was compelled to abandon his scepticism and, after almost half a century of patient, first-hand investigation, published these personal convictions:

"The narrative [concerning Paul's visit to Athens (Acts 17)] never makes a false step amid all the many details." (*St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, p 238)

"Luke is a historian of the first rank." (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, p 222)

"In short, this writer [Luke] should be placed among the very greatest of historians." (*Idem*, p 222)

"The present writer [Ramsay] takes the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness." (*Idem*, p 81)

Many more scholars since Ramsay have been obliged by the weight of evidence to write in similar vein. What a long, long way the stream of Bible knowledge has flowed in the past one hundred years!

*Conclusion* Two practical lessons emerge from our study of Biblical Archaeology:

**(1) The Amazing Precision with which God Times His Moves**

The era of so-called "scientific criticism" of the Bible began about A.D. 1750. The era of Modern Archaeology began about A.D. 1800. No sooner had the "epidemic" of criticism appeared, than God produced His antidote! To meet the sophisticated scepticism of this scientific age, He has reserved an armoury of tangible, indisputable, contemporary evidence whose force and relevance increase with each passing year.

**(2) The Wisdom of Waiting until all the Evidence is in**

God's most effective answer to the radical critics of the Bible has been the passing of time. The critics spoke too soon. They did not have too much scientific information; they had too little!

If only they had waited for a few more years, they would have spared themselves and others much heart-burning and embarrassment. A good lesson for us all when we encounter problems either in God's Providence or in His Word!