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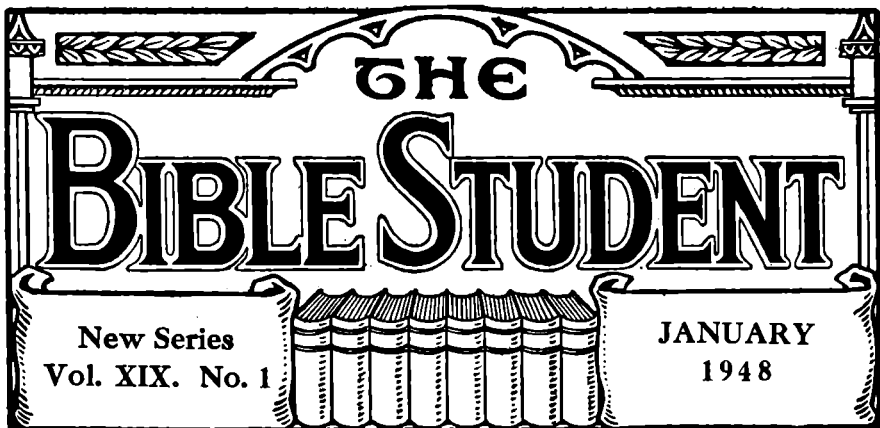
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"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"

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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

The Bible Student

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NEW SERIES

JANUARY, 1948

VOL. XIX. No. 1

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK!

EDITORIAL

Thoughtful minds, appalled at the terrifying spectacle of "crashing worlds", turn instinctively to the young people growing up amidst it all. Many questions involuntarily arise as they contemplate the war-scarred world, battered and broken. It is the same old world, but the conditions to be faced are new. These sadly need remodelling in numberless ways. Will the youth of to-day be capable of building a "better world"? Will they lay more enduring foundations; will they know to choose the spiritual and the moral as being the *supremely* essential "substance" of all social and national life? Will they read the testimony of the past that none can leave God out and still expect to prosper in the long run? Will they give heed to the great lessons of history, as well as of the Bible, that, even if a man "gain the whole world and lose his own soul" he loses everything, both in time and eternity?

These are not fanciful questions. They are but a few of the many which fill the minds of those who dare to think other than superficially. The answers are numberless, according to the viewpoint of the thoughtful. The optimists are full of hope and great expectations. Others are hesitant; uncertain of matters which so obviously concern the spiritual as well as the material. The majority are alarmed. For there are signs—many ominous signs—to which no one can close his eyes with impunity. These signs are to be found at the roots of the social fabric; the roots from which spring the fruits of the future. For the roots of all life and the foundations of empires, we repeat, lie deep in the

spirit and soul of man. If things go wrong *there*, all is wrong as history both social and religious bears eloquent and unwavering witness. It is in that realm that War has had its most devastating effects. Great and serious problems are created as a consequence, which require most careful and wise handling, with courage and sympathy—as well as a deep sense of spiritual values.

Side by side there are other features observable. Notably, a new 'curiosity', even desire, to know what the Bible has to say about these conditions and problems. Can it help to restore something of what the spirit of man has lost in the welter of blood and tears of the past years? People turn to this Book afresh with an indefinable sense of need within the soul. There is a renewed feeling that it may have some uplifting word for the present moment. In most unlikely instances and in many ways this spirit of enquiry is bringing back the Old Book to its own in the minds of men and women. This also is a "sign"—a sign of which the ancient Prophet spoke in a bygone yet similar day of despair: "When the Enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a Standard against him"—THE WORD OF GOD!

These significant though very different signs constitute a *challenge* to the Christian Church to-day. If they mean anything it is that the soul of man is facing a desperate spiritual and moral need; a need which the Bible is capable of replenishing—for which it was divinely given to satisfy. It has a message for our day and generation; a message never possessed by any other literature, except as derived from this. Here is available the cultural and spiritual dynamic capable of restoring faith to the wavering mind and health to debilitated souls. We are not surprised, therefore, at the growing desire, sometimes only vaguely expressed or felt, for a more effective and satisfying study and preaching of the Bible. If only people will turn back to read for themselves, the Book will speak with no uncertain voice—with sympathy, with authority, with healing and unerring guidance. Not the voice of men *about* the Book, but the Voice of God *within* the Book—this is *the* Remedy for the present wrongs. Therefore—*Let the BIBLE speak!*

But it must be the *Christian*, first and foremost, who must lead the way back to the Bible. If the youth of to-day are to be encouraged to read it, there must be felt the personal influence

of Christian young men and women who themselves have proved the power of its message and its meaning in their own experience. The force of personal example must be allowed fuller expression—our *life* must tell. Those who acknowledge the claims of Christ in true-hearted discipleship must display a greater desire to help their fellows. Specially do we need a rekindling of *enthusiasm for the study of the Word of God*. For Bible study is vital work; vital, because at this crisis so much depends on the right understanding and practical application of the Bible's message. Vital also because it is *the* equipment we need for fruitful service, and in gaining it we shall verify the Apostle's word to Timothy—"thou shalt save both *thyself* and *them* that hear thee." But it will require a high degree of resolve and holy determination, for the Devil is going all out in trying to quench zeal and hinder progress. Yet who can waver—and *win*?

More urgent than ever is it that those who aspire to leadership in any branch of Christian service should obtain more than a mere "technical" knowledge about the Bible, its critical problems of origins, composition, chronology, or similar questions. These have their rightful place, but can never substitute for the all-essential spiritual mastery of the Bible itself. Speaking from personal knowledge, a church minister recently made the frank confession: "The average theological student of to-day is more certain of what he does *not* believe than of what he does believe, and though he may sincerely want to do good, he lacks the burning, consuming *conviction* which makes the good preacher and teacher." "The fact is", remarks another able authority, "some notable exceptions apart, modern academic Bible teaching has smacked far too much of *second-hand* thinking, whilst the exigencies of examination work leave the student crammed with ill-digested information largely derived from one-way lectures and text books, as officially recommended. Men and women have been leaving the colleges bewildered with superficial criticisms of the Christian verities, a non-committal tongue in their head—in a word, starting the work of life broken-winded."* Prof. James Orr of Glasgow, writing from a long and wide experience said: "It may be gravely questioned whether

* *The Vital Challenge of Bible Certitude*. C. W. Hale Amos, D. D.

this constant discussion going on *about* the Bible . . . and perpetual weighing of its parts in the nice scales of a critical balance, has not at least one harmful effect, that, *viz.*, of coming in between men and the devout, prayerful study of the Bible itself, out of which alone can grow that sense of its harmony and proportion, and experience of its saving and sanctifying power, which yield the best proof of its divine origin." It is the firm conviction of well-informed Christians, including scholars of international repute, that nothing has been so successful in cooling off the ardour of earnest souls as the "critical method" referred to above. The facts are too glaringly true to be questioned. Take a recent testimony from that excellent English bi-monthly, *The Bible Speaks To Britain*.* "Only this year", says the writer, "whilst at home in England, I had the privilege and joy of helping a modernist Minister of a big Church to believe the Bible to be the Word of God. His own confession, along with others, was: 'Modernism has emptied our hearts and our Churches.' Then he went on to tell me how his own father, an old, bed-ridden, modernist Minister also, had called him to his bedside to tell him of *his* new and marvellous discovery. He said: 'Son, I am now reading my Bible as the Word of God, and grieve over the long lifetime that I have only read it as a text book.'"

What we require in this day of crisis and challenge is that, young men and women shall be encouraged to go to the Bible *itself* for a firmer grasp and deeper understanding of the *spiritual content of the books of the Bible*. By such means a spiritual foundation is laid in knowledge and character as the only true basis of the all-effective leadership which is the most urgent need of the hour. But it calls for preparation and equipment in vital spiritual intelligence—by the enduement of the Spirit and the discipline of experience in the ways of God. No less does it demand the sanctifying knowledge of the Word of God. It is the Spirit *and* the Word, as also the Spirit *in* the Word—not either alone, which are the divinely-ordained means of preparation for leadership in the service of God. Nothing is more calculated to stimulate the spiritual life of the Church than the Word being given the

* Edited by Hugh Redwood, Religious Editor of the *London News Chronicle*. The July issue contains the article from which we quote, written by Mr. Edward Hodgson, a noted Missionary working in the Belgian Congo.

chance to "find" the soul anew, in a way and to a degree never before felt. This, however, only comes as each Christian "discovers" his own Bible anew in his own individual experience.

That was a splendid testimony which the chairman, Dr. W. Wilson Cash, Bishop of Worcester, gave at the Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in London, last May: "I want to put it to you that our *real interest* in the Bible does begin when it *comes alive* in our experience. . . Years ago the Bible *came alive to me*, and ever since it has been the Book of Life in my own personal experience. . . I quite literally discovered God—I want to underline that word '*discovered*'. And that is an experience that is shared by millions of people in all parts of the world." If we only would, that 'discovery' is supremely worth putting to the test right now, in this crisis hour.

"It is no exaggeration to say that each great movement for good in the Christian Church has coincided with a fresh study of the Bible. It was so with the great Fathers of the first ages, with Origen, and the masters of Alexandria; it was so with Jerome and Augustine; it was so in the tenth, the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. At each crisis, deeper investigation of Scripture found new treasures which answered to the wants of a new society. And by God's help it will be so now. The power of the Bible is *unchanged and inexhaustible*."

If then any lack the strength of a true motive and dynamic in this, or any other sacred demand Love lays upon our spirits—let him ask of God, with a fully dedicated mind, an intense yearning to glorify God, and a sustained doing of the will of God. In His turn, God will do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, even the power of the risen Christ, who hath given us of His Spirit.*

* The Editorial is substantially chapter 1, revised and adapted, from the Editor's recent book *Let The Bible Speak*, published by Oliphants Ltd., London.