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The Bible: Try It!*

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."—2 Tim. 3, 16, 17.

This is the anniversary day of the New York Bible Society. How shall we use the occasion? I am not concerned here and now with the many Biblical problems raised by modern criticism and research. I am not afraid of the work of reverent scholarship. I welcome all the wealthy ministries of interpretation which are being so abundantly applied to the understanding of the Word of God. I am prepared for surprises of insight and vision. The morning glory of revelation has by no means "spent her golden store." "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his holy word." And that sacred light is being given in our own day. Scriptural areas that were dim and hazy, lying in uncertain twilight, are emerging from the mist like panoramas in the dawn. We are gaining clearer knowledge upon many things. Just as finer lenses enrich and enlarge our apprehension of the material heavens, so finer lenses are enriching our apprehension of the spiritual heavens. The Lord is giving us better tools and instruments, and realities are appearing that were once confused. I think we know some of the prophets as we have never known them before; the mists and obscurities are lifting, and we can see the moving life, and we can feel the play of passion, and we can realize the vital correspondence with our own time. The old environments are being more and more unveiled; scholarship is deciphering the significance of forgotten dust; silent landmarks have found a voice; the realms of the dead are being repeopled, and in the recovery of buried worlds buried truth obtains a resurrection. And so for all the gifts and work of consecrated scholarship which discovers new wealth in the old world, I offer God most hearty praise.

But that is not the line of meditation that I wish to follow to-day. There are many who busy themselves with the intricate problems of the Bible who have no mastery in the experimental knowledge of Christ. They spend their time in studying the guide-post, but they have no vital acquaintance with the road. They have a magnificent knowledge of the map of the country, but they are not familiar with its bracing air, and its refreshing springs, and its coverts from the tempest, and its pleasant arbors by the way, and its lilies of peace, and its rich and plentiful fruits which are good for all the changing seasons of our life. They know the book in the letter, they are strangers to the spirit. They know it as literature, they do not know it as revelation.

*A sermon delivered for the New York Bible Society by Rev. John Henry Jowett, M.A., D.D., in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 8, 1911, in recognition of the one hundred and second anniversary of organized Bible Society work in New York City.

They come to it as students, they do not come to it as sinners; they bring their curiosity, they do not bring their needs. They treat it as a manual of absorbing mental interest, they do not regard it as a *vade mecum* in the eternal concerns of the soul. They do everything with the Bible except prove it. They remain in the lecture room and discuss its doctrines, they do not go into the infirmary and apply its teachings to broken lives, and more particularly to their own.

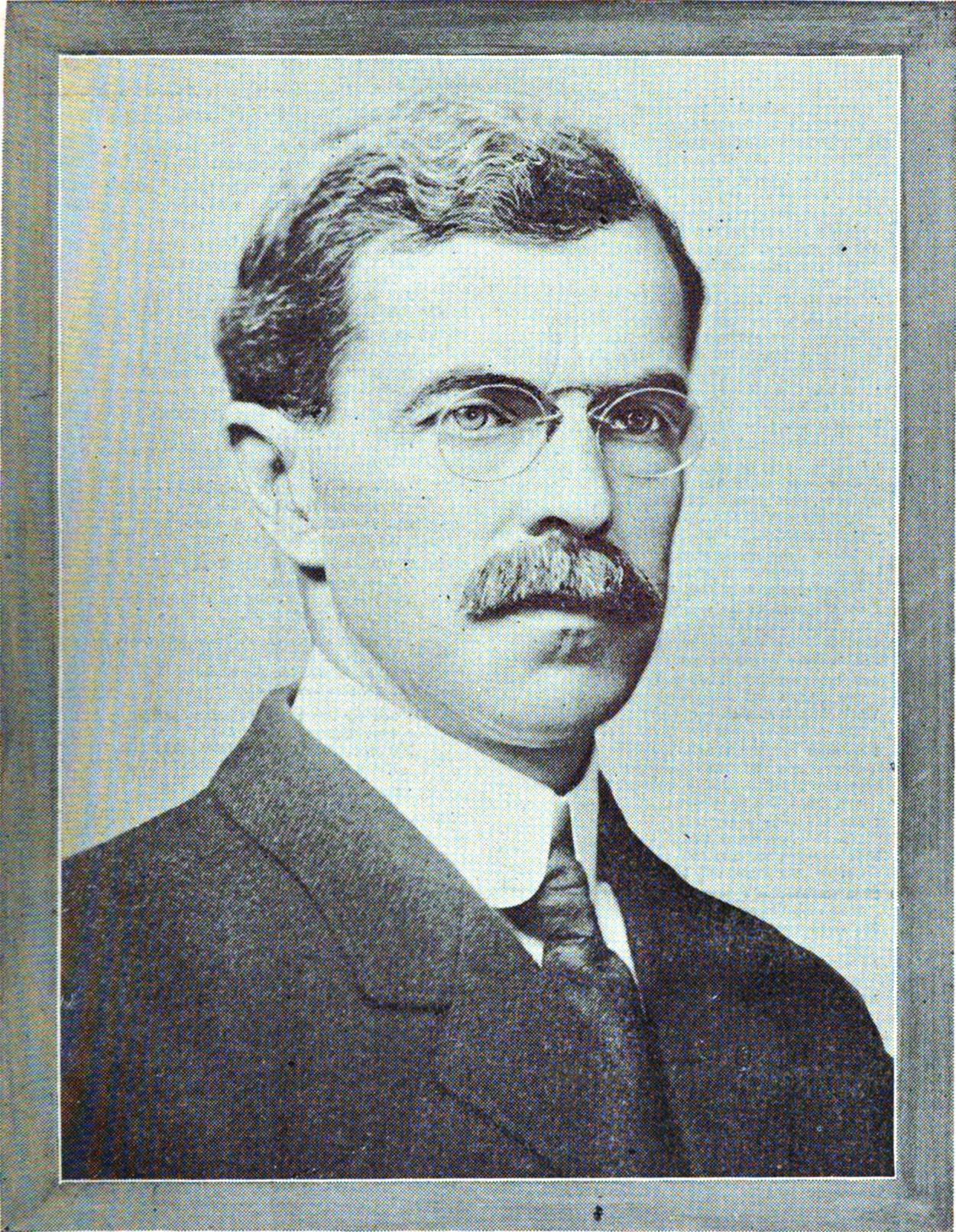
So that my purpose this afternoon is a very simple one, and may all be expressed in a simple phrase: try it! Test its teachings experimentally, honestly, earnestly, persistently, by submitting your life to their control and direction. These teachings claim to be "profitable," workable, efficient, vitally helpful, profoundly advantageous in practical service. Try them! Prove them! Subject yourself to their counsels, and in personal experience resolve the question as to the essential value of their claims. And I do not know that you can have a better order for your experiments than just the order of my text, where it is claimed, that inspired scripture is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

Turn to the first claim. It claims to be "profitable for teaching." That is to say, it claims to give us the loftiest teaching concerning the loftiest life, and how to find its true fountain and blessedness. It is "profitable" for the unveiling of the ideal life. It will teach us how to think about life; it will furnish the mind with thought, and vision, and ideal; it will disclose the patterns in the mount; it will reveal the contour of things unseen. That is its claim. Well, let us try it. I take Ruskin with me to Switzerland, that he may unveil to me the harmonious majesty and delicacy of the country, its exquisite loveliness, wedded to its august and austere grandeur. And I am bidden to take the Bible with me in my exploration of life that there may be unfolded to my gaze the wonderful glories of the "life indeed."

Let me try it. Let me begin with its unveiling of the face of God. We must read slowly, lingeringly, absorbingly, adding lineament to lineament until we gaze upon the glory of the Lord. We must read with our eye upon the object, quietly and deliberately fashioning for ourselves the Biblical conception of God. We must gaze upon his holiness, until we are dazzled by a radiant whiteness for which material things provide no symbols. We must gaze upon his grace until the fulness and spontaneity of it affect us like the mighty roll of the sea. We must gaze



REV. JOHN HENRY JOWETT, D.D.



DR. JOHN GRIER HIBBEN, ELECTED PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

Princeton Honors Itself by Honoring One of Its Faculty

A good criterion of the worth of a man, and one which it is well not to ignore, is the opinion of those who know him best and most intimately. Adhering to this general proposition every one who wishes Princeton University well has grounds for the greatest possible optimism as the election of its new president is announced.

Dr. Hibben was born in Peoria, Ill., April 19, 1861; the son of the Rev. Samuel and Elizabeth Grier Hibben. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton with the class of '82, and his Master of Arts degree in 1893. He was a theological student at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1883-1886, and at the University of Berlin. Lafayette College conferred the de-

gree of Doctor of Laws upon him in 1907. He was married to Miss Davidson, of Elizabeth, N. J., in 1887, and was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in the same year and became the pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Chambersburg, Pa., where he remained until 1891, when he became the instructor of logic and philosophy, which instructorship he held for two years when he was advanced to a professorship, which he has held ever since.

His literary work has consisted of his being editor of a twelve-volume work entitled "Epics of Philosophy." He is also the author of "Inductive Logic"; "The Problems of Philosophy"; "Hegel's Logic," and "The Philosophy of the Enlightened."