

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good

THE BIBLE STUDENT

AND

TEACHER

VOLUME IX.—New Issue

JULY TO DECEMBER, 1908

Continuing "The Bible Student" formerly published in Columbia, S. C.—Old Series, Volume XVII.

Issued by the Educational Committee of the Bible League of North America

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BIBLE LEAGUE OF NORTH AMERICA, 86 Bible House, New York City

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The Bible Student and Teacher

Volume IX.

SEPTEMBER, 1908.

Number 3

Notes Editorial and Critical

One of the most enterprising publishing houses has just issued a book, by a professed expert in financial matters, with something like this taking title, "How to Invest One's Money". There are multitudes the world over who might have been saved from the sorest financial straits, if they could have had, a year or two ago, authoritative directions on this point and—been compelled to follow them. But, fortunately or unfortunately, most of the money of the "get-rich-quick" worldlings would now seem to have been permanently, if not profitably, invested. So it seemed in order for one of our contemporaries to suggest that this new book is already a "back number", and to propose a second, "How to Get Money to Invest"—or perhaps a third, "How to Get Back what One has Invested"—as more timely and practical.

But appeals that are coming to us, now that the money of the "worldling" has been added to the permanent speculative "sinking fund", would seem to suggest another title of a book for some writer of the lightning-express order to put into the hands of the enterprising publisher: "How Christians Should Not Invest their Money". This strikes us as the most timely title of them all. Why?

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Because so many "disinterested" men, in Christian and even Clerical garb, are devoting themselves to inducing *Christians*, who may chance to have a few dollars, to start in the same *via dolorosa* in which the *worldlings* have gone with their lost dollars. Here is a "noted evangelist", endorsed by his Conference, appealing to his converts to "get rich quick"! Here are ever so many preachers and Christian workers turning aside from their Christian mission—if they ever had any—and alluring their "constituency" to invest their slender means in all sorts of fake real estate schemes, by the promise of fabulous returns! And so along a score of lines, appeals are showered on us in the name of "Christian benevolence", sometimes assuring returns of 500 per cent. in five years! Ought not some one to write and send out speedily, a book on "How *Christians* Should Not Invest their Money"?

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A reader of The Bible Student and Teacher who enjoyed the brilliancy and information *A Dissent*, displayed in the article on Anglican Reform in the August number, was not able to follow the writer to his rhapsodical conclusion, for two reasons:

Not only is the Primate of all England an insufficient force to reduce Anglican, Roman, Greek and Ameri-

Have these men never read enough history to learn that before Christ came the world was in the horrid grip of Paganism? Have they not sufficient discernment and logic to see that their scheme to rob the world of the Christ will remand it to a Neo-Pagan-

ism that will leave it in a worse plight than that in which the Christ found it?

We may well pray God to save the Church and the World from becoming dominated and perverted and cursed by the religious philosophy of these "sensible Americans"!

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The Value of Truth

PROF. F. P. RAMSAY, PH.D., CLARKSVILLE, TENN.

There are those who tell us that truth is impossible of attainment, and therefore conclude that wisdom lies in agnosticism. The Bible, on the other hand, builds on the principle that truth is ascertainable, even the truth concerning God. Nor is this a question for argument, for argument can not proceed at all except on the assumption of the possibility of truth; it is a question of *underived faith*. The healthy human mind has faith in the possibility of getting at truth in some directions; and the human mind when healthy religiously has faith in the possibility of getting at truth in religion. This is the fundamental postulate, the essential starting-point, without which advance in any region is impossible.

There are some present-day philosophers who offer us a substitute for truth. They turn from the question, *What is true?* to the question, *What is worth while?* They dissuade men from making judgments of fact, and would persuade them to confine attention to judgments of value. They are careless whether Jesus Christ actually lived and died and rose again; it is enough for them, if belief in such a Jesus does good. Some such view has come to be associated in many

minds, whether justly or unjustly, with the name of Ritschl. Instead of calling this lack of desire to determine whether certain statements of fact are true, and this appreciating rather of the question whether certain conceptions are uplifting, *Ritschlian-ism*, we prefer to call it *agnostic pragmatism*.

But this phrase implies a *gnostic pragmatism*, a name we may give to the philosophy which, while differing from agnosticism by asserting that we can determine what is true, yet agrees with it in denying that we can arrive at this determination by a straight line. It agrees with agnostic pragmatism in assuming that we can determine what beliefs will turn out to be useful; and it differs from it by asserting the general principle that beliefs are true or false, according as they shall turn out to be useful or to be practically unfit to uplift.

This form of pragmatism—assuming to infer the truth or the error from the utility or the inutility—is primarily concerned, not with the truth of beliefs, but with their availability as guides and motives to action. As in all other forms of pragmatism, so the pragmatic philosopher who holds this form can not tell beforehand that two contradictory be-

liefs may not both turn out to be useful to different persons in different conditions. Pragmatism, then, is at its root, like agnosticism, *an indifference to truth*.

Such *indifferentism*, of every form, is of course in direct contradiction to the truly scientific spirit, which believes in the possibility of ascertaining the truth; is devoted to such pursuit, however long and arduous, as is necessary to this ascertainment; and would not care for values apart from truths.

The common *impatience with dogma* is largely a manifestation of this prevalent indifference to truth. The age is asking for what will work, not for what has been said or taught. The demand is for methods and teachings that will promote the betterment of society, not for methods and teachings authorized by truth. There is a contempt of truth which we may call *Pilatism*.

This indifferentism, agnosticism, pragmatism, or Pilatism affects Biblical Criticism. Minds dominated by this spirit invent hypotheses and question beliefs, for the benefit of the in-

tellectual gymnastic, or as a sort of sport or pastime. Being themselves indifferent to truth, they are able to conceive prophets and Jesus as being likewise indifferent, and so inventing or reporting *useful* beliefs without meaning thereby to affirm their truth.

This agnostic pragmatism likewise affects Biblical Interpretation. He becomes the best interpreter who gets the most preachable interpretation of a passage. To make the words of the Bible to teach that which is to-day most practically useful is far better, on this view, than a purely scientific effort to understand the exact meaning originally intended.

This condition of things shows that in our time we need *martyrs to truth*. Such martyrs are the illuminators of all the ages. This, which is the only scientific spirit, will bring us back to grammatical and logical and archeological fact, that we may thereby get at literary and spiritual fact.

Jesus was a witness to truth, a martyr, i. e., a witness to the death; the Roman who crucified Him was contemptuous of truth. Pilate was pragmatic; Christ was scientific.

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Is There No Science Independent of Faith?

WILLIAM COWPER CONANT

To accumulate argument and evidence for the truth of any single proposition, in the region of probable or contingent matter, may be of less service than it seems, however satisfactory. For there are always unknown factors, leaving something to be said on both sides of any such question; leaving it, to the *inquiring* mind, still an open question, with

probabilities only in place of certainties. In a matter beyond human cognizance, such as a Divine Revelation, or a miraculous birth or resurrection, or a science of the stellar universe, we do not and can not assure ourselves merely on the evidence supporting any single element of the science; because there still remain debatable views and explanations of it and uncertainty