

THE CANADIAN EPWORTH ERA

Vol. XIII.

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Editor

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1911

WILLIAM BRIGGS
Publisher

No. 2

THE HIGHEST CRITICISM

THE Bible is the monumental revelation of the heart and mind of God to the mind and heart of man. It is God's book of cheer for the cheerless, of hope for the hopeless, of inspiration for pilgrims who seek the homeland of the soul.

In these days many have come to fear for the fate of the Bible in the hands of scholars who are busy applying the test of the higher criticism to its sacred pages. But there is a "highest criticism" to which attention needs to be called. For the real test of the Bible is put to it not by scholastic criticism, but by the criticism of life.

When a man, beset by temptation, searches the Scriptures to find some reason that will make it worth while to fight against evil; or when one whose sin has found him out seeks its way of mercy and forgiveness; or when a man whose eyes are dimmed with the tears of recent sorrow turns its pages to find words of comfort in his affliction, that is the time to be afraid for the Bible. If it stands the test of life's need it can be trusted to endure easily all other tests.

And this highest criticism of the Bible has produced a startling amount of evidence to prove the trustworthiness of the Book—such evidence, for instance, as is summed up in the remark of Sir Walter Scott when he was dying. "Bring me the book," he said. "What book?" asked Lockhart. And Scott replied, "There is but one Book now. Bring me the Bible."

Questions of the date and authorship of the Scriptures have their place in the researches of learned men, exactly as the age, size and composition of the stars matters for astronomical science. But the light of the stars guides the voyager to his desired haven, although he may be ignorant of the fact that recent scientists have declared that the nebular hypothesis must give place to the planetesimal theory of creation.

And there are things hid from the wise, as the world counts wisdom, which are revealed to simpler folk who have found the Bible to be a light to their path. Among these things the test of life stands pre-eminent. Next to that stands the test of time. Systems of thought and orders of society have been succeeded by newer systems and better orders, but during all the centuries no word of the Bible has ever become obsolete, nor has any part of its revelation been inadequate.

And this is true, not because the poetry of the Bible is sublime and its songs deathless. It is true, not because its history is incomparable and its stories models of rhetorical simplicity. But it is true because the Bible enshrines in its matchless pages of brilliant literature and

thrilling history and priceless poetry the story of God's love for man as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ.

Granted that man did not create himself, it is to be expected that his Creator would find a way to speak to souls He had made, souls with aspirations that in their flight outstrip the sweep of flying worlds, with thoughts that outstretch the farthest horizon that telescopes can reach.

Granted that such a revelation is demanded, it is to be expected that it would come to all sorts of men—to physicians and fishermen and politicians and poets and statesmen and saints.

Such a revelation is bound up between the covers of the Bible.

It chronicles the expectancies and longings of the world, and displays Jesus as the answer to the world's need.

Because He lives in its pages the Bible not only survives the shock of hostile criticism, but it also fully meets the utmost and the age-long needs of life.—*Addison Moore, in the Examiner.*

