

It seems in our day that the Bible has come to be regarded by the secular world as being insignificant and valueless. This is a sad misfortune as the Bible, aside from its obvious spiritual application, is also of great value as a literary work and historical source.

The Bible has had more influence on the shaping of the western world than any other single or collection of works. Its influence can be seen in the very structure of our society, its traditions and its laws, as well as being expressed in its art, literature and music.

The Bible, whether we like it or not, has been a major force in the shaping of the world around us, and in this regard, its study is as important for the non-believer as for the believer.



In the study of history, primary documents and sources of all kinds are required to piece together the past in an intellectually acceptable manner. W.H. Walsh says in *Philosophy of History: An Introduction*; "Although the past is not accessible to direct inspection it has left ample traces of itself in the present, in the shape of documents, buildings, coins, institutions, procedures and so forth." [Walsh: *The Philosophy of History: An Introduction*; p. 18]

The Bible has been and can be used as this very type of primary source, that Walsh speaks of as being important to the historian and his work.

It is important that both Christians and non-Christians realize this. Alan R. Millard expresses this in his article, "The Old Testament and the Near East". "The Bible is an ancient text, a historical record. As such it is very helpful to study it in the light of the world in which it was written."

"There is nothing un-Christian in doing this. The Christian faith depends on historical events, things which actually happened. The events recorded and explained in the Bible can be set alongside other events known from other historical sources. The Bible itself consists of documents as ancient and as historically verifiable as any others." [Erdman's *Handbook to The Bible*, p. 228].

It seems that the major argument against using the Bible as a historical source today, lies in the fact that it is a religious writing which emphasizes the supernatural. While this observation is a correct one, it should not exclude the Bible from use as a historical source. By its very nature it is an ancient writing, which deals with many very pertinent aspects of the ancient world including, religion, politics, monetary systems and various aspects of the life of the common people. It should not be limited in its use as a source by the prejudices and biases of some historians.

Josh McDowell expresses this ably: "For many today, the study of history is

## Literary Impact

Another academic area in which the Bible has had obvious influence is that of literature. It has been a source of inspiration, reference and as a base for images. We can see this influence in such early works as the *Mystery Plays*, examples of which are, *The York Crucifixion*, and the *Wakefield Noah*. Throughout the years the influence of the Bible can be seen in drama, poetry, and fiction. Today it is obvious in such works as *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Godspell*. Cleland B. McAfee expresses the importance of the influence of the Bible on literature in his book *The Greatest English Classic*: "If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all of the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them." [Evidence that Demands a Verdict, p. 26]

## The Bible Lives Today

incorporated with the ideas that there is no God, miracles are not possible, we live in a closed system and there is no supernatural. With these presuppositions they begin their "critical, open and honest" investigation of history". [Evidence that Demands a Verdict, p.8].

Granted, the Bible has to be examined in the light of what it is, a religious writing, but this should not hinder its use as a source. Any historical source is written from a certain frame of reference, or point of view, and has to be examined in that way by the historian. He, in turn, will draw some conclusions or make some judgements, which will, to some extent, reflect his own opinion.

This concept is expressed by the many different schools of historical philosophy and thought which exist. This does not lessen the credibility of any of these views as Walsh says, "History might then be said to give us a series of different but not

## Historical Relevance

incompatible portraits of the past, each reflecting it from a different point of view." [The *Philosophy of History: An Introduction*, p. 19].

Before the view that the Bible can be used as a historical source is accepted the evidence pertaining to its reliability must



While the Bible has much value outside of the spiritual realm, it must be looked at in context, as a work that claims itself to be

the inspired word of God. It is in this light that the UNBCF group is embarking on a scripture distribution campaign. We

believe, that the study of the Bible can have much value outside of the spiritual realm. We believe primarily that it is the Holy Inspired word of the divine God, and it is intended to lead men back into a fellowship relationship to God through His Son Jesus Christ. We would only ask that you approach the Bible with an open mind, aware that it has intellectual value, but also aware that it reveals "The power of God unto salvation."



be examined. The noted New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce in his book, *The New Testament Documents*, points out that there are in existence today some five thousand ancient copies, in Greek, of the New Testament. The most relevant of these dated as early as 350 A.D. He compares this to the existing original documents that speak of Caesars Galic War. These number around nine or ten good copies, the earliest of which were written some nine hundred years after the event. He also draws a comparison with the existing works of the famous Roman writer Tacitus, which essentially rely on two manuscripts, one of the ninth, and one of the eleventh centuries. It seems that in terms of a number of sources and the importance of early dating of these sources that the New Testament Documents can more than hold their own in relation to other ancient authorities.

Numbers and early dating are not enough, Christian writings, with regards to factual information have been proven as being accurate by various contemporary sources. The aforementioned Tacitus, and the well known Jewish historian Flavius Josephus to name only two. Archaeology and modern scholarship have also borne out the factual accuracy of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

Luke especially, among the New Testament writers has earned a renowned place as an historian. Professor E.M. Blaiblock Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, calls him, "a major historian in his own right" and "a man of meticulous accuracy." The noted archaeologist Sir William Ramsay said, "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness".

Finally, the world famous archaeologist William F. Albright said of the Bible, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament Tradition". [Evidence That Demands a Verdict p. 68].

## WITCHCRAFT

I was very interested in Murphy's article on witchcraft. I decided it really deserved the attention it might claim by virtue of what is written is inspired by the Holy Spirit. If he did not believe since I still have all my hair, had his burners on low!

Leaving aside this whole question, it seemed that the article behind the article was focused on freedom of expression and "...those of another faith, methods as sincere and Christian ones, attempt to reach a conclusion."

Presumably, this "same conclusion" both witches and Christians attempting to teach is the a "self-purification".

To support this conclusion advances a long historical which stresses the increasing antipathy and active persecution of witches, from the Middle Ages to the time of the eighteenth century. It is true that no historical pretension to scholarship was this did not take place in a period.

After setting the scene in the basis of witchcraft theology through a description of the functions, and symbolism as Cerennos and Habondia, the figures in the witches' scheme. This is followed by further outlining the stages a new through as he-she becomes new in witchcraft.

This account is then wide an explanation of the organization of the coven and followed by a comparison of between, the two devoted the traditional Alexandria reformist Gardianians. Murphy closes her article with her Witchcraft and Christianity structure and purpose.

I have taken up so much appreciation of what Murphy in her predominantly descriptive order that it may be read where the assumptions originate the basis of both the and conclusions I reach. In the hopefully enable anyone to verify my own line of themselves.

In the few instances philosophical base of mentioned, as opposed to the on both ritual and procedure that "Witchcraft, unlike Judeo-christianity, emphasizes the barriers are drawn between of good and-or evil." and following "There are no but the fervent belief that these do not exist above and beyond mores."

Earlier in the article, Murphy that "...the time has come to those myths and to replace witchcraft, the religion, accepted as totally valid her behalf of Witchcraft, of the ian conception that moral