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THE BIBLE AND CHRIST FOR YOUNG MEN THREE SELECTED PARAGRAPHS FROM "FIRST THINGS FIRST"

BY REV. GEORGE JACKSON, B.A.

SCORES of young men begin to read their Bible at the wrong place. The first thing to settle is not the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis, but our relation to Jesus Christ. Never mind how sin came into the world; it is here—the Bible did not make it—and it is doing the devil's work in our lives. Christ assures us He can put right what is wrong. The testimony of multitudes, living and dead, confirms what He declares. Why, in God's name, why will we deny ourselves the good that Christ offers us, because, forsooth, there are things in Genesis we do not understand?

I do not mean that these questions are of no importance, that it matters not how we think about them. But what I do want to urge upon you is—do not for their sake postpone what is of far greater moment. Let it be first things first. And these certainly are not among the first things; they can afford to wait. But that which cannot afford to wait, that which has waited too long already, is your decision to yield yourself to Christ as His servant. Delay no longer, I beseech you, but this moment answer to His call and follow in His footsteps.

...

I DO not want to seem intolerant. I do not want to put my Bible under a glass case and to say to the critic, "Hands off, there!"

Let him sift and dissect and analyse as he please. But if, when his work is done, he offers me some poor pale ghost, and says, "this is your Jesus;" if he brings me back a faith emptied of miracle, of prayer, of immortality, and says, "this is His gospel,"—no, a thousand times no! If you want that Christ, take him; He is not John's

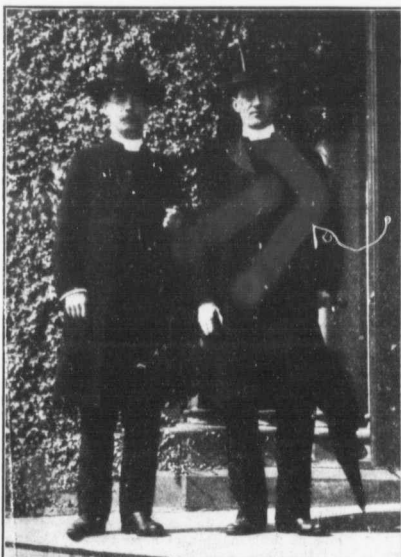
Christ; He is not mine. If that faith can help you, be it so; lean upon it; but mark, it is not Christianity. Call it what you please, but do not steal for it the Christian name. That was not the creed of the first century; it is not the creed of the twentieth.

It was not so our fathers believed; neither so will their sons believe after them. Not yet, on the world-scale at least, has this new gospel proved itself to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

...

I AM a follower of Christ to-day, not only, not chiefly because in His example is the loftiest standard of human duty, but because—let me still speak in the first person—I have found that what Christ bids me be, He helps me to be. Do you say, "So will any great example help us?" Yes, but not as Christ does. He makes His own strength mine. There is the ideal, shining like the stars, like them too, distant; but Christ walks at my side, and aids my stumbling feet up the fearful steep. What other, however great and good, can do that for you? I think if I could have lived with Luther—Luther the strong and the brave—I might have grown strong and brave too. I think if I could have spent the livelong summer day with "sweet St. Francis of

Assisi," that pure and gentle spirit who "used to call the very flowers, sisters, brothers," I might have grown pure and gentle, too. But they are dead, they are gone, and the past folds them in its ever-thickening mists; but Christ lives! He lives in them that trust in Him; He lives in them to make them even as He is.



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(As seen by the Editor on the Metropolitan Church steps during the Ecumenical Conference.)