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"The Bible"

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No one can study the history of the Bible without being impressed with the fact that it is the worlds most remarkable book. Hated by some, while loved by others; criticized, defended, studied, ignored- it still is the Book for which all enlightened men must have some word of explanation.

A recent educator of Yale University once said, "I BELIEVE A KNOWLEDGE OF THE Bible is more valuable than a college course without the Bible". We are happy that we need not make the choice, but it is a fact worth considering in a day when so often those who are exposed to learning are of the opinion that the Bible has been outmoded by education.

I.

In the past fifty years our nation has experienced progress in many ways. Those of us who live in this mid-century have witnessed this rapid change. Many people here can remember the first automobiles, the first electric lights, the first radios, telephones airplanes and last but not least, the atomic bomb. A man is not too old today who remembers the first improved highway that went by his place, nor the first time he talked on the telephone.

But this is not the only change. To be sure, this has been an age of rapid change. But the change has been mostly a change in the tools with which we have worked. We have made great advancement in the field of physics, chemistry, and industrial engineering and the like.

At the beginning of the Christian era the western world was ruled by the City of Rome. There, from the throne of the Caesars, went forth the decrees that made the kind of world the people knew in the days of the Savior and His Apostles. Roman rulers, some arbitrary, vicious and morally depraved, held

the lives of some sixty million people in their hands and exercised unlimited power of life and death over every man. Those who would glorify the Roman era as a time of world peace often fail to take into account that it was a peace obtained by policing the world at the cost of all personal liberty. The democracy of Rome was a sham. The Caesars ruled with a totalitarian power unsurpassed by a Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin or any of their successors.

II.

Furthermore, Roman civilization was a thoroughly ^{Pagan} civilization. It had inherited the mythical gods and goddesses of the Greeks but had lost much of their intellectual refinement. The gladiatorial combats, chariot races and circuses of the great Coliseum were steeped in blood and were literally riots of immorality. Indecency was flaunted openly, and crimes of all kinds were lightly considered. Of all the nations of those days the Hebrews alone seemed to have a moral standard and it was based on the Scriptures that we know as the Old Testament.

When Christ stood with His disciples, giving them final instructions before His ascension, He commissioned them to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Earlier in his ministry he had said unto them, "And the gospel must first be published among all nations". These men, empowered by the Holy Spirit after the day of Pentecost, went out to accomplish a task of unbelievable proportions: twelve men to evangelize the world. But the task was not a hopeless one, for it was committed to twelve men plus God. This has been precisely the secret of the spread of the Bible through the ages. It has not been the unaided efforts of men, but the work of a great God working through men as they surrendered themselves to Him. There is a hidden, unseen power in the Word of God that is a mystery to the unbelieving world.

III.

Those who know history will acknowledge the truth