

The Testimony of Great Men

Editor's Note: With all the character assassination of the founding fathers of the United States a person would be lead to believe that they were as bad as the present administration. But there is no doubt from the following portions taken out of the book, Confirming the Faith, 1910, that they were by far of a different character than the present. And for Canadian content we will add Queen Victoria's witness to why Great Britain was great.

If there is any one message that is proclaimed in the Bible today it is this; "The Divine plan of Human Redemption for All People." This to me was the message of the Apostle Paul, when wrote to the Christian Church at Rome "I am a debtor both to the Greek and to the Barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise; so as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" Romans I:I4. I5. Now this message of Paul's is being fulfilled and accepted today. There is a common complaint made today, although absolutely without foundation, that the Bible is not equal to the demand of the educated people of today, and that it is only accepted by the unlearned and ignorant, and they say that this is why people are accepting the learned teachings of Mrs. Eddy and others. Now if this be true, let me say that it is not because of their abundance of intelligence, for I have yet to find one person who has an intelligent understanding of Christian Science.

But then again can it not be truly said that the greatest intellects of today are found in our churches on the Lord's day worshipping the God of the Bible. While it is true that the Bible is so plain that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein, yet the keenest intellects in all, the various callings of life have bowed their heads and hearts be-

fore the presence of God, and worshiped Him and have gladly learned of His laws and precepts, and have accepted them. To satisfy my own mind that this were really so, I have given this matter a special study, endeavoring to find out the place the Bible has occupied and today does occupy in the minds of great men.

In pursuing our study, let us give to our own Presidents, and American Statesmen the honor of heading this list of great men to speak on this matter. Writing to President Roosevelt, now Ex-President, I asked Mr. Roosevelt to what place in his mind did he give the Bible, and replying through Secretary Loeb he sent me a copy of an address, delivered by himself before the American Bible Society, from which I have taken the following extracts; "Every thinking man, when he thinks, realizes what a very large number of people tend to forget, that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally?I do not mean figuratively I mean literally?impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals; all the standards towards which we, with more or less resolution, strive to raise ourselves"?"The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and the oppressed. Down to modern times, no State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account; in which the duties, so much more than the privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. No where is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State in the long run, depends upon the

righteousness of the citizen, so strongly laid down. The Bible is the most Democratic book in the world?" "If we read the Bible aright, we read a book which teaches us to go forth in the work of the Lord; to do the work of the Lord in the world as we find it; to try and make things better in this world, even if only a little better, because we have lived in it. That kind of work can only be done by the man who is neither a weakling nor a coward; by the man who in the fullest sense of the word is a true Christian, like Great Heart, Bunyan's hero. We plead for a closer and wider and deeper study of the Bible, so that our people may be in fact as well as in theory, doers of the word and not hearers only. Surely we have reason to be thankful for the esteem and reverence which Ex-President Roosevelt gives to the Bible.

Next to Mr. Roosevelt we will consider the testimony of our beloved martyred President, Abraham Lincoln. Who has not yet become acquainted with Lincoln as a man of faith in God, and one who was acquainted with the Scriptures. For some reason or another there seems to be great diversity of opinion as to the religious sentiments of Mr. Lincoln. Some people are unwilling to admit that Lincoln was a Christian man, while others are totally ignorant of his attitude toward religious things. That we might be thus enlightened, I quote from a recent issue of the Literary Digest, the statement of Dr. Jacquess, who was Colonel of the Seventy-third Regiment, Illinois Infantry Volunteers, during the Civil War, also a Preacher at Springfield in the days of Lincoln. Dr. Jacquess writes. "The mention of Mr. Lincoln's name, recalls to my mind an occurrence that perhaps I ought to mention. I notice that a number of lectures are being delivered on Abraham Lincoln, but they all when they reach one point, run against a stone wall and that is in reference to Mr. Lincoln's religious sentiments. I happen to know something on that subject that very few persons know. My wife, who has been dead nearly two years, was the only witness of what I am going to state to you as having occurred. Very soon after my second year's work as minister in the Illinois Conference, I was sent to Springfield. There were ministers in the Illinois Conference, who had been laboring for twenty-five years to get to Springfield the capital of the State. When the legislature met there were a great many people here and it was thought to be a matter of great glory among the ministers to be sent to Springfield. But I was not pleased with my assignment. I felt my inability to perform the work. I did not know what to do. I simply talked to the Lord about it, however, and told him that unless I had help I was going to run away. I heard a voice saying to me, 'Fear not,' and I understood it perfectly. Now I am coming to the point I want to make. I was standing at the parsonage door one Sunday morning, a beautiful morning in May, when a little boy came up to me and said: 'Mr. Lincoln sent me round to see if you was going to preach today.' Now I had met Mr. Lincoln, but I never thought any more of Abe Lincoln than I did of anyone else. I said to the boy: 'You go back and tell Mr. Lincoln that if he will come to church he will see whether I am going to preach or not.' The little fellow stood working his fingers and finally said: 'Mr. Lincoln told me he would give me a quarter if I would find out whether you are going to preach.' I did not want to rob the little fellow of his income, so I told him to tell Mr. Lincoln that I was going to try to preach. I was always ready and willing to accept any assistance that came along, and whenever a preacher or one who had any pretense in that direction would come along I would thrust him into the pulpit and make him preach because I felt that anybody could do better than I could. The church was filled that morning. It was a good-sized church, but on that day all the seats were filled. I had chosen for my text the words, 'Ye must be born again,' and during the course of my sermon, I laid particular stress on the word 'must'. Mr. Lincoln came into the church after the services had commenced, and there being no vacant seats, chairs were put in the altar in front of the pulpit and Mr. Lincoln and Governor

French and his wife, sat in the altar during the entire service, Mr. Lincoln on my left and Governor French on my right. I noticed that Mr. Lincoln appeared to be deeply interested in the sermon. A few days after that Sunday, Mr. Lincoln called on me and informed me that he had been greatly impressed with my remarks on Sunday and that he had come to talk with me further on the matter. I invited him in and my wife and I talked and prayed with him for hours. Now I have seen many persons converted; I have seen hundreds brought to Christ and if ever a person was converted, Abraham Lincoln was converted that night in my house. His wife was a Presbyterian, but Mr. Lincoln was not inclined that way. He never joined my church, but I will always believe that since that night, Abraham Lincoln lived and died a Christian gentleman.' What a beautiful sight it must have been, to see this great man; great in body, great in mind, great in spirit bow before Almighty God, repentant and seeking pardon for his sins. And how well did he display the beautiful graces of his Christian character in the walk of his life. Just after his first election as president, Mr. Lincoln made this declaration of faith. 'I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming and I know His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me?and I think He has?I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand and Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglass doesn't care whether slavery is voted up or down, but God cares and humanity cares, and I care; and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright.' Another occasion when Lincoln though president of the United States, displayed his spirit of reverence and worship for the God of the Bible, was during the Gettysburg campaign. When tremendous issues depended on a turn of battle, General Sickles asked the President if he had felt no fears when all others were alarmed. 'No' said Lincoln, and added: 'Well I will tell you how it was. In the pinch of your campaign, when everybody seemed panic stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed to him mightily for victory at Gettysburg. I told Him that was His war and our cause His cause. And then and there made a solemn vow to Almighty God that if He would stand by the boys at Gettysburg I would give my life to Him. And He did and I will. And after that?I don't know how it was and I can't explain it?but soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that things would be alright at Gettysburg and that is why I had no fears about you.' Who knows, but that the victory at Gettysburg was won because President Lincoln prayed.

Ex-President Grover Cleveland, who recently passed to his reward, likewise was a man who embraced the teachings of the Bible. The New York Commercial, referring to a letter written by Mr. Cleveland, has this to say, 'Writing to a Baltimore clergyman, who had written a book on the New Testament and which Mr. Cleveland was asked to preface, he wrote, 'I very much hope, that in sending out this book, you will do something to invite more attention among the masses of our people to the study of the New Testament and the Bible as a whole. It seems to me that in these days there is an unhappy falling off in our appreciation of the importance of this study. I do not believe as a people, that we can afford to allow our interest in and veneration for the Bible to abate. I look upon it as the source from which those who study it in spirit and truth will derive strength of character, a realization of the duty of citizenship and a true apprehension of the power and wisdom and mercy of God.' Patrick Henry, one of our great American Statesmen and orators, upon being visited by a friend who found him reading his Bible, said, 'Here is a book worth more than all the other books which ever were printed; yet it is my misfortune, never to

have till lately, found time to read it with proper attention and feeling.' And just before he died, calling his family into his room that he might take of them his last farewell, Patrick Henry held in his hands a copy of the Bible and addressing them said, 'My children I leave you this book, it is the greatest legacy that could come into your possession.' And what shall we say to the scores, yes hundred of brainy men, who in this country of ours have borne testimony to their acceptance of the Bible.

From among the cloud of witnesses, further representing the intellect of the world, we appeal to England and we give the first place to speak, to Queen Victoria. An African Prince who was sent on an embassy with costly presents for Queen Victoria from an Ethiopian court, preferred a modest request that Her Majesty would tell him the secret of England's greatness and glory. Queen Victoria did not, like Hezekiah, show the ambassador her diamonds and her precious jewels and her rich ornaments, but handing him a beautifully bound copy of the Bible, said, "Tell the prince that this is the secret of England's greatness.' What a beautiful testimony from the Queen of England. Let me give another illustration of Queen Victoria's acceptance and faith in the teachings of the Bible. 'In a quiet cottage not far distant from Windsor Castle, the palace of the Queen, there lived some years ago, an aged Christian woman, who had seen nearly her hundredth year. The Queen having heard of this aged pilgrim decided to visit her. Great indeed was the joy of the old lady, as she looked on the face of her earthly sovereign. She exclaimed, 'What a joy, and what an honor to me that my Queen should come to see me.' Then she added joyfully, 'But I expect a greater joy, a greater honor still and that before long, I am going to see 'the King in His beauty,' Then softly and with much feeling, the aged saint enquired, 'May I venture to ask if your Majesty has such a hope?' Calmly, Queen Victoria the Sovereign of Great Britain and Empress of India, replied to the aged Pilgrim: 'Through Jesus Christ whose blood cleanseth from all sin, I have such a hope.'

Victoria has since passed to the realization of her hope and certainly her confession is worthy of the attention of all under the British flag, yes, and of every one else besides, for it expresses the only way of access into the presence of a Holy and Righteous God; the only title to a home in heaven being "The Precious Blood of Christ."

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