

**THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE TO
MODERN LIFE: TWELVE STUDIES
ON THE MAKING OF A NATION;
THE BEGINNINGS OF ISRAEL'S
HISTORY**

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The Bible's Message to Modern Life: Twelve Studies on the Making of a Nation; The Beginnings of Israel's History by Charles Foster Kent & Jeremiah Whipple Jenks

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CHARLES FOSTER KENT & JEREMIAH WHIPPLE JENKS

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THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE TO MODERN LIFE

Twelve Studies on
The Making of a Nation
The Beginnings of Israel's History

BY

CHARLES FOSTER KENT
JEREMIAH WHIPPLE JENKS

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The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible. That will bring us the reality — freedom.—*Garibaldi.*

If the common schools have found their way from the Atlantic to the Pacific; if slavery has been abolished; if the whole land has been changed from a wilderness into a garden of plenty, from ocean to ocean; if education has been fostered according to the best lights of each generation since then; if industry, frugality and sobriety are the watchwords of the nation, as I believe them to be, I say it is largely due to those first emigrants, who, landing with the English Bible in their hands and in their hearts, established themselves on the shores of America.—*Joseph H. Choate.*

And, as it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it comes to be understood, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at; by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. Nor is it at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.—*Butler.*

Mr. Lincoln, as I saw him every morning, in the carpet slippers he wore in the house and the black clothes no tailor could make really fit his gaunt, bony frame, was a homely enough figure. The routine of his life was simple, too; it would have seemed a treadmill to most of us. He was an early riser; when I came on duty at eight in the morning, he was often already dressed and reading in the library. There was a big table near the centre of the room; there I have seen him reading many times. And the book? It was the Bible which I saw him reading while most of the household slept.—*William H. Crook, in Harper's Magazine.*

The Bible has such power for teaching righteousness that even to those who come to it with all sorts of false notions about the God of the Bible, it yet teaches righteousness, and fills them with the love of it; how much more those who come to it with a true notion about the God of the Bible.—*Matthew Arnold.*

If we be ignorant, the Scriptures will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us.—*King James's Revisers, 1611.*

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INTRODUCTION

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE BIBLE

In the early Christian centuries thousands turned to the Bible, as drowning men to a life buoy, because it offered them the only way of escape from the intolerable social and moral ills that attended the death pangs of the old heathenism. Then came the Dark Ages, with their resurgent heathenism and barbarism, when the Bible was taken from the hands of the people. In the hour of a nation's deepest humiliation and moral depravity, John Wycliffe, with the aid of a devoted army of lay priests, gave back the Bible to the people, and in so doing laid the foundations for England's intellectual, political and moral greatness. The joy and inspiration of the Protestant Reformers was the rediscovery and popular interpretation of the Bible. In all the great forward movements of the modern centuries the Bible has played a central role. The ultimate basis of our magnificent modern scientific and material progress is the inspiration given to the human race by the Protestant Reformation.

Unfortunately, the real meaning and message of the Bible has been in part obscured during past centuries by dogmatic interpretations. The study of the Bible has also been made a solemn obligation rather than a joyous privilege. The remarkable discoveries of the present generation and its new and larger sense of power and progress have tended to turn men's attention from the contemplation of the heritage which comes to them from the past. The result is that most men know little about the Bible. They are acquainted with its chief characters such as Abraham, David and Jesus. A few are even able to give a clear-cut outline of the important events of Israel's history; but they regard it simply as a history whose associations and interests belong to a bygone age. How many realize that most of the problems which Israel met and solved are similar to those which to-day are commanding the absorbing attention of every patriotic citizen, and that of all existing books, the Old Testament makes the greatest contributions to the political and social, as well as to the religious thought of the world? National expansion, taxation, centralization of authority, civic