

**OUR STUDY MEETING; OR THE  
OFFERING OF ISAAC BY  
ABRAHAM CONSIDERED BY A  
BODY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649665372

Our Study Meeting; Or the Offering of Isaac by Abraham Considered by a Body of Sunday School Teachers by J. Hornsby Wright

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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BY  
**J. HORNSBY WRIGHT.**

AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES OF A CHARITY  
ORGANIZATIONIST;" "CONFESSIONS OF AN OLD ALMSGIVER," ETC.



London:  
**HODDER AND STOUGHTON,**  
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXI.

141. m. 991.

## P R E F A C E.

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THE following pages present an attempt to show that the Evangelic Theology, with all its vital verities, can be held in their fulness by those who tie themselves to no conventional *patois*, or timid propriety in regard to mere style.

Against such characteristics, if the writer may trust his own observation and experience, a dead set is being made in our day, at least by all who embraced not the Truth in those halcyon days when Evangelical Christianity was represented amongst Churchmen by a John Newton or Henry Venn, amongst Nonconformists by a John Angell James.

"Certainly the aspect of the times should modify the preaching," once wrote Ohio's saintly Bishop, Charles Pettitt McIlwaine. The concession of course concerned *manner* alone, and in no degree extended to *matter*, at least where fundamentals are concerned. But if such a precept will hold as regards the more sacred outpourings of the pulpit, how much more must it be applicable to religious utterances unconnected with the sanctuary!

The following pages contain a fair picture of the kind of treatment which Bible-themes were wont to

receive at a Teacher's Study-meeting over which it is but ingenuous to confess that, owing to the other innumerable and oppressive engagements of the clergy, the author as superintendent had almost always to preside.

As, however, the normal arrangement on such occasions is undoubtedly for the clergy to occupy the chair, the author has thought it better to give that form to the meeting as depicted in his pages.

## OUR STUDY MEETING.

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### EVENING I.

**SCENE.**—The class-room of the National School of the District. The occasion—The Sunday School Teachers' Weekly Study Meeting.

**SUBJECT.**—The offering up of Isaac.

**PRESENT.**—The Rev. FERDINAND FAITHFUL, M.A., Incumbent.—The Rev. ZACHARY ZEALOUS, B.A., Curate.—Mr. HORATIO RULE, the Superintendent, a Gentleman of private means.—Mr. LOGIC, M.A., Barrister-at-law.—Mr. GENTLE, M.A., formerly a University Tutor.—Dr. WELLREAD, LL.D., preparing young men for the Universities, &c.—MAJOR MODEST, a retired Military Officer.—Mr. EBENEZER SHREWD, an elderly person in a good way of business.—Mr. OLDWAYS, a retired Draper in good circumstances.—MATTHEW HUMBLE, Clerk to a Firm of Solicitors.—REUBEN ARTLESS, a young Mechanic.

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After the singing of a hymn, and prayer by the Curate, the Vicar thus addresses the meeting:—

We have before us this evening one of the most profoundly interesting, not to say startling, of Old



Testament chapters. Few events or transactions ever recorded by pen sacred or profane can vie in peculiarity with the intended offering, at Divine command, of Isaac by Abraham as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Whether we look at the intense, the unique singularity of the command itself as calculated (*seipso*, that is, and apart from the character and rights of Him who gave it), to outrage every instinct and feeling of our nature, its startling inconsistency with enactments at that very moment constituting Divine Law, not to name other considerations which will present themselves as we proceed, it must be admitted that no portion of Holy Writ could be more fraught with interest, or require, in the treatment of it, more guidance from on high. In proceeding to study the contents of this matchless chapter, the first thing demanding consideration seems to be the word "tempt."

*Mr. Shrewd.*—I beg pardon, sir. I hope we are not going to pass over the words "after these things."

*Vicar.*—Are they more than a simple chronological indication fixing the point in Abraham's career at which the transaction took place?

*Mr. Shrewd.*—I regard them, sir, as the key to the whole business. 'Tis a case, I opine, not of *post hoc* only but of *propter hoc* likewise.

*Vicar.*—Well: give us your views on it. It happens to be your turn to open our subject.

*Mr. Shrewd.*—Well and good, dear sir. But please remember you will get nothing from me but my own

thoughts. I study the Bible first hand. Not from what boys call "bumptiousness," or anything of that kind, but I pin not my faith to any annotator under the sun. Since I first knew the Lord I have always had this feeling, that the self-same reasons, so to speak, which our Heavenly Father had for giving us a Bible at all would make Him safe to give us a sound, workable, safe Translation—a Translation which would never lead us wrong in anything material—a Translation near enough, correct enough, and sound enough for all practical purposes, and it's very little I care for purposes of any other sort. Moreover, I have full leave and license—nay it is my bounden duty—to go direct to Him for guidance in studying my Translation. What told on the minds of the writers and kept them all square can just as well tell on the minds of the readers and keep them all square. Besides the Bible was not meant for scholars as such, but rather for no-scholars—for wayfaring men though fools,—

*Vicar.*—Yes; only this morning I was reading the learned John Smith's profound Discourse on Prophecy ("Select Discourses," 175), in which he says, "The Scripture was not writ for sagacious and abstracted minds only, or philosophical heads; for then how few are there that should have been taught the true knowledge of God thereby." Excuse my interrupting you.

*Mr. Shrewd.*—Well then, dear Mr. Vicar, it comes to pass that what you get from me is only what I have got from the Bible direct, and not, if I may speak

commercially, *viâ* other peoples' brains, or any route, line, or track of thinking, marked out by learned divines, whether as old as the hills or as modern as Bishop Ryle (God bless him)!—

*Vicar.*—But had you not better come to the subject more immediately before us? Kindly favour us with your thoughts on this phrase, “After these things.”

*Mr. Shrewd.*—Very good, sir. But let me premise a few things first, *Imprimis*. I presume we are all agreed that the Bible is not the work of many authors, but of One, that is God. *Item*. That when that Sole Author was providentially bringing about, adjusting and arranging the events and happenings fore-ordained to furnish the subject-matter of Genesis, He was quite aware that He intended in after ages to have that Epistle written to the Romans wherein this same Abraham was to figure as the A 1 example of justifying faith. *Item*. That it is plain as the noses on our faces, that what Abraham was fore-ordained to shine in more than anything else was Faith, glorious Faith. *Item*. That this was in order to make plain the way and the manner of Justification, one of the matters about which that upstart man has seen fit to differ very extensively in opinion and liking from his maker,—God, I take it, going in for Justification by faith and all the glory—man determined to have his finger in the pie, and two-thirds of the glory, and hence going in for Justification by works, or at all events regaling himself with a kind of theological