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# THE BOOK

... the first line of which reads, "The Holy Bible," and which contains Four Great Treasures ...

## by BRUCE BARTON

### BIBLE CRITICS MISUNDERSTOOD

THERE are, of course, thousands of fragments of the Bible or parts of it of more or less value. Among these are certain "palimpsests," or manuscripts, which later fell into the hands of those who wanted the parchment for other purposes and erased the Bible text and wrote other books instead. Chemical processes have been used to restore the Bible text, and in some instances valuable readings have been discovered.

This recital of the way in which manuscripts have been found brings us to the mention of a class of men of whom the average layman knows very little, and most of that little is wrong. These are the Biblical critics. "Criticizing the Bible!" What columns of rhetoric have been printed, what floods of oratory have been poured out by those who could not have told, to save their souls, what a Biblical critic is or does.

There are two kinds of Biblical critics: the lower or textual critics, and the higher or literary critics. The terms lower and higher do not mean that one group claims or is admitted to be more important than the other, much less that there is an assumption of arrogance on the part of those that are "higher," but that one kind of study follows the other.

The lower critic is a man of technical skill in the deciphering of ancient texts and manuscripts. He has critical ability, that is, the ability to judge critically, for criticism is nothing more or less than the science of correct judgment.

To the average layman a manuscript of the fourteenth century may seem as ancient as one of the fourth. It may be more soiled and show greater sign of age. But the critic does not look simply at the wear and stain. He is a judge of parchments, of methods of tanning skins, of kinds of ink, of styles of making letters. He distinguishes between "uncial" and "cursive" Greek; between "pointed" and "unpointed" Hebrew. These lower critics are not widely known; they are not highly paid. Their work is a strain on the eyes and a tax on the mind, and they dread publicity. So mainly they bleed within their armor and are silent, but all the time their patient work is clearing up the obscurities in translation and giving us a better knowledge of the Bible.

The other group of searchers are the literary or historical or higher critics. Who wrote these sacred books? Ezekiel claims to have written his own, and Baruch is declared to have been Jeremiah's scribe. We may infer that most of the books of the prophets were written by the men whose names they bear. But all the rest of the Old Testament is anonymous. People have rushed in to declare that certain books were written by certain men. Most of their guesses are guesses.

(Next week: Our Debt to Jerome) Copyright, Bobbs-Merrill Co.



Bruce Barton

20 per cent margin. The speculative buyer of farm land has one advantage. It takes longer to foreclose the mortgage on a farm than it does to close out a stock-broker's customer, and in the meantime there is always the chance that a benevolent government will come to the farmer's aid. I have not heard of anybody offering to help the small speculators who were caught in the stock-market collapse, but there has been some concern about the losses of speculators in farm land.

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## SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM

## TODAY and TOMORROW

by FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE

### FLYING . . . safe and cheap

An airplane flew low over Indian Fountain, just west of my farm, last Sunday, and landed in Joe Springstrop's cow-pasture. No, it wasn't a crash. Nobody was hurt. It was just a couple of boys experimenting with a home-made plane, powered with a Ford engine. They hope to get a Government contract for cheap, safe planes.

Two other young inventors have just brought out small "foolproof" planes, that can be sold for \$700 or \$800. One of them made 110 miles in hour in a test flight. Experts say nobody could crash either of those planes if he tried.

Safe, cheap flying is almost here. I think it promises to be as big an industry as automobiles. Half the adventurous boys I know are going in for flying. When everyone takes to the air, what changes it will make in our ways of living and thinking!

### LEMONS . . . and war

Next to lemon pie my family likes lemonade on hot Summer evenings. A two-quart pitcher of lemonade doesn't last us very long. The other day my wife came home from the store indignant. "I had to pay fifty cents for a dozen little lemons!" she said. "Last week they were only 30 cents. Tom Fallon says the wholesalers have boosted the price to him nearly double."

I asked a friend in the citrus fruit trade about it, next day.

"It's the war in Africa," he said. "Italy has bought up all the European lemon crops and is bidding for California lemons. They need 'em for their soldiers, to keep them from getting scurvy."

"War," said my wife, when I told her that, "is what General Sherman said it was. No more lemon pie until Mussolini and the Ethiopians get through fighting."

War anywhere certainly touches everybody somewhere.

### FARMERS . . . sans character

For a hundred years and more

the old Hubbard farm, up near Long Pond, has supported, educated and made good citizens out of generation after generation of Hubbards. A few years ago old Mr. Hubbard sold the place. I drove by the other day and saw an auction sale going on. The new owners were being "sold up" to satisfy their creditors, and the savings bank had foreclosed the mortgage on the land.

"Guess they just ain't good farmers," said Mr. Hubbard, when I stopped by his cottage down the road to ask him how come. I dropped in at the bank. "No character," was the banker's harsh judgment. "Thought they could make a living without working and spend money before they earned it. Do you know any real farmer who'd like to get a good place cheap? There's a bargain for a man and wife with character and a little capital. It's no place, though, for movie-hounds, joyriders or people that want short hours and long vacations."

I have a notion that a lot of the distress among farmers, that we hear so much about comes down to that.

### FARMS . . . selling again

I get reports from the Middle West of a revival of activity in farm land sales. Good farms in Nebraska have recently sold for from \$100 to \$150 an acre. One South Dakota farmer friend writes me that he has been offered \$150 an acre for his quarter section. An Iowa farmer whom I know tells me that he refused \$60,000 cash for his 600 acres recently.

Those prices do not compare with the speculative prices at which similar farm land changed hands in the boom days. They probably represent more nearly the actual value of the land, in terms of earning capacity in the hands of competent farmers.

A great deal of the farm distress has come from buying land at fancy or speculative prices.

### SPECULATION . . . is speculation

I have never been able to see much difference between speculating in land and speculating in stocks. The man who bought Iowa farm land for \$500 an acre, as I saw many buying it during the War, paying a quarter down and giving a mortgage for the balance, was heading for trouble just as surely as the city speculator who bought Radio or any other stock at the peak of the market, on a

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