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By JOHN G. RIDLEY, M.C.



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VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH

BY

JOHN G. RIDLEY, M.C.

Lieut., 1st A.I.F.

AUTHOR OF

Worthy the Lamb

The Unsheathed Sword

The Chieftain Among Ten Thousand

Gleams of Glory

Visions and Voices (Poems)

"... And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."—Eph. 6: 17.

S. JOHN BACON,

Australian and New Zealand

Representative for

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"Valiant for the Truth"

My friends, I count it a privilege and an honour to stand on this platform to-night to speak on the vital theme of the Truth of the Scriptures. May I be permitted to say how much I appreciate such a Society as the Bible Union; not only because of its definite defence of the Bible as the Word of God against the unveiled attacks of infidels and modernists; but also because I believe it advocates a positive knowledge of the Scripture, which is, after all, the strongest means of resisting the insidious growth of falsehood and error which we face to-day.

A CENTRE PARTY

In my work as an Evangelist I have noticed of late the appearance of a new party on the field of conflict between Truth and Error. For a long time we have faced the left-wing Modernist, with his straight-out attack on the foundations of the Christian faith; but of late I have been alarmed and saddened to meet several people who profess they are not Modernists, and at the same time quickly follow up by saying they are not Fundamentalists. They hold the balance of the two—a Centre Party. One of these people, a learned preacher and teacher of some distinction, said to me some little time ago, "I am not a Modernist. I believe in the Incarnation of Christ; the Deity of Christ, and the Atonement—that is, not in crude ideas of the Atonement—an Atonement. Christ died for us. But I am

Notes of an Address delivered at an
Annual Meeting of the Bible Union.

willing to take all Truth that comes to us from Science and other sources."

My wife chimed in, "But we must hold to the simple doctrines of the Word of God." He replied immediately, "It depends what you mean by the Word of God." I believe if I had probed my friend a little deeper he would have made it plain that the Bible, to him, only contained the Word of God; and on that basis, I venture to say, he would preach and teach; and such a basis, I contend, is calamitous to the cause of Christianity on the earth.

My friends, beware of this Centre Party. "They are not valiant for the Truth upon the earth." Beware of the Centre Party, because they are not sure what is Truth, or what part of the Bible is the Infallible Word of God. To be brotherly and friendly with the Modernist, they ridicule the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Bible; yet at the same time to cling in some way to the old Fundamental position, they disclaim the title "Modernist" by asserting their loyalty to some of the great fundamental facts of Christianity.

May it not be that the great God often grieves over the land as in Jeremiah's day, saying, "They bend their tongues like their bows for lies; but they are not valiant for the Truth upon the earth." No, indeed, they are so anxious to find Truth outside the Holy Scriptures, that when Science casts a doubt upon the Genesis account of the Creation; the Flood; the story of Jonah and the great fish; the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and the future sufferings of the lost; they bow politely and say, "Well, you know we never

did believe that the Bible was the whole Truth—the Word of God—and we are quite ready to embrace this greater vision of Truth, to which you have now introduced us." How sadly the Lord must witness such treachery, and mourn over it with the words of the text, "They are not valiant for the Truth upon the earth."

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"The Truth!—What is Truth? What do you mean by the Truth?" Someone will ask. Ah, that is an old question. Pontius Pilate, sitting in judgment on Jesus, asked the same question centuries ago; and perplexed, puzzled people are asking the same question to-day. "What is Truth?" I am thankful for God's perfect answer in John 17: 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**" One great Bible teacher gives this comment on the verse. "Thy Word—God's whole Revelation—instructive, corrective, warning, encouragement, promises—as often found in the Old Testament." "**Thy Word is Truth.**" There are many other passages which could support that statement, but we shall just look at one more. In 2 Tim. 4: 2-4 Paul warns his son in the faith. "Preach the Word," Whose Word? God's Word—the Truth. That is proved lower down. (v. 3) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables." In the light of that coming apostasy, Paul urged young Timothy, yea, he charged

him—charged him in the sight of God, and of the Lord Jesus, and of the judgment—to be valiant for the Truth upon the earth.

MR. VALIANT-FOR-THE-TRUTH

I wonder if you ever read John Bunyan's description of Mr. Valiant-for-the Truth? A man with a drawn sword in his hand, and with blood on his face, who fought for three hours with three foes, until the sword did cleave to his hand, and then, when sword and hand were joined together, it was as if the sword grew out of his arm, and he fought with more power. "It is a right Jerusalem blade," said Greatheart. "It is indeed," said Valiant. "Let a man have one of these blades, with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. Its edges will never blunt. It will cut flesh and bones and soul and spirit and all." Such was honest John Bunyan's view of the Scripture; and if you and I would be "Valiant for the Truth upon the earth," let us be prepared for warfare, knowing that the Lord will teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight with the "Sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God.

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURE

(1) My friends, if you would be valiant for the Truth upon the earth, I urge you to **look to your Captain for Inspiration**. "Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ," and as the written Word is Truth, so Jesus Christ, the living Word,—the Word made flesh,—is Truth personified. How valiantly He used the Jerusalem blade in the wilderness temptations. As One who absolutely depended upon it, He

struck three terrific blows at Satan. "It is written!" "It is written again!" "It is written!" You will notice Satan did not once retaliate to those blows. He didn't say, "Hath God said?" or "It is not so." No! No! Satan knew his opponent, and the Jerusalem blade which broke his attack three times, rang with the challenge—"The Scripture cannot be broken."

CHRIST AND VERBAL INSPIRATION

In John 10, when the Jews took up stones to stone Him, because He, being a Man, made Himself God, Jesus drew the Jerusalem blade and said, "Is it not written in your law, I said Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken," Jesus here calls the Scripture "the Word of God," and, as Panton points out, our Lord based the entire weight of His argument on a verbal use of it. "If He called them gods, and the Scripture"—which is here one word on which Jesus put all His weight—"cannot be broken." Here is verbal inspiration with a vengeance.

"What!" says one, "Do you believe in verbal inspiration?" Where am I if I don't? For to quote D. M. Panton again, "If the words of the Bible are not inspired, how can I reach its inspired meaning? and how can I know that I have reached it? If some words are inspired and not others, how am I to distinguish between the two? If no words are inspired, why do I trust the Bible any more than Shakespeare or Bacon? A document which claims to be inspired, but is only inspired in parts, is like an official chart of a

harbour which, claiming to mark all rocks, marks only some: it is more dangerous than no chart at all." Certainly I believe in the verbal inspiration of the original manuscripts. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

"But," you say, "none of these original manuscripts have survived!" True, but the variations between the existing manuscripts—some four thousand in number (copies of the original)—amount to not more than one thousandth of the entire text.

Dr. Hort tells us, "The words still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the New Testament." Therefore, we can agree with Panton when he says, "When we have thousands of manuscripts scattered over the world, in various languages and various countries, all purporting to come from one original, and they differ in only one word in a thousand, it is mathematically certain that that original is substantially in our hands."

Again, our Lord was valiant for the Truth when the Sadducees tried to trip Him with the problem of the woman who had had seven husbands—"In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?" "Ye do err," the Lord said, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. . . . Have ye not read . . . I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here, from the tense of a verb—"I am"—He deduces the doctrine of the Resurrection to the Sadducees.

CHRIST FULFILLED SCRIPTURE

Again, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Peter drew his material sword to fight for Christ, He said, "Put up again thy sword into his place. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But"—and here the Jerusalem blade flashes—"how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?" So Christ yielded Himself to His enemies.

In John's graphic account of the Crucifixion, four times I read "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Then after the Resurrection, I read of Jesus speaking to two of His disciples, opening to them the Scriptures, and expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Again, we hear Him saying, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me."

Canon Liddon tells us that there are 333 references in the Old Testament to Jesus Christ. Our Lord fought to fulfil these, and He did! Grandly He fulfilled God's Word, and going hence He could say, "I have given them Thy Word." Yes, He gave us His Father's Word. He performed His Father's work. He propagated His Father's Truth. He did not quote from any other writers, only from His Father's Word, and He never argued about it. "It is written," was enough for Jesus. How different to the false prophets of to-day, who quote this one and that one,—this professor, and that doctor, and a host of

others—in their desperate effort to disprove the Word of God.

Bishop Moule, who was valiant for the Truth upon the earth, once said, "When my Lord Jesus became a living and unutterable necessary reality to me, I remember that one of my first sensations of profound relief was: He absolutely trusted the Bible, and though there are in it things inexplicable and intricate that have puzzled me so much, I am going, not in a blind sense, but reverently, to trust the Book, because of Him." The same Bishop Moule was no mean Theologian and he was "Valiant for the Truth upon the earth."

During the American Civil War, at the battle of Bull Run, the Federal troops, pressing hard on the Southern forces, drove them back in disorder. One General, however, rallied his men by pointing his sword to the Virginia regiments in well-ordered array on the height above—"Look," he shouted, "there is Jackson standing like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!" The men rallied behind "Stone-wall" Jackson and won the day.

When you are inclined to give way to the strong appeals of those who are trying to disprove the Bible as the Word of God, then look at Jesus, standing like a stone wall, "Valiant for the Truth," and rally behind your Redeemer.

CHAMPIONS FOR THE SCRIPTURE

(2) Again, if you would be valiant for the Truth upon the earth, then glance for a few moments at the great Cloud of Witnesses for Encouragement.

Look at **Paul**—that Champion for the Truth. I read in Acts 17: 2, "Paul . . . reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Not from some theory of man, but "out of the Scriptures," that masterly Apostle reasoned with them. In the Epistle to the Romans I find him bringing his challenge home like this—"What saith the Scripture?" As if to say, "That will settle it." To the Galatians he uses the same words, "What saith the Scriptures?" To the Corinthians twice he refers to the Word of God in a particular way. "We are not as many who corrupt the Word of God," and "Not handling the Word of God deceitfully." To the Ephesians he recommended "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." While he exhorts young Timothy, amid drift, declension and decay in the Church, to cling to the Scriptures, saying, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect." Without doubt Paul was "valiant for the Truth upon the earth." Let us glance at a few others:

Bishop Ryle, of Anglican fame, said, "I have no hesitation in owning that I believe in the plenary inspiration of every word of the original text of Holy Scripture. I believe the inspired writers were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit, both in their selection of matter and choice of words." Oh, for men of the same stamp to-day! What a conviction to bring into the ministry! What power comes from such a conviction!

Turn to Sir James Simpson, an outstanding Presbyterian surgeon. Near the close of his

life he said, "I have mixed a great deal with men of all shades of opinion. I have heard men of science and philosophy raise doubts and objections to the Gospel of Christ, but I have never for one moment had a doubt myself since I believed. Never so much as one doubt of the Bible crosses me now. If we could fully understand the Maker of the World or His Word, it would just prove that He neither made the one, nor wrote the other."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that princely preacher of the Baptists, said, "Give up the Bible? We would sooner give up our lives. Doubt the inspiration of the Bible? Some of us never can, for it has inspired us."

D. L. Moody, speaking to a gathering of preachers, once said, "My great desire is to get you students of the Bible. What we want to-day is men who believe it from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet. Make up your mind you will put the Bible into every address you make. If you want power, get full of the Word, and go preach it, and teach it, and talk it." That was the direct appeal of the great soul-winner. "We want men who believe it from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet." It may sound childish to many, but it means that those who so believe it are valiant for the Truth upon the earth. Time would fail me to tell of many others—Robert Dick Wilson, Wm. Jennings Bryan, George Muller, the Bonars, McCheyne, Samuel Rutherford, Dr. Chalmers, R. A. Torrey, Wm. Burns, Hudson Taylor, and a host of others, "who kept the

Word of His patience" and were "valiant for the Truth upon the earth."

A great cloud of witnesses indeed!

(3) A few reasons why you should be Valiant for the Truth upon the Earth.

(a) **Because of the Power it Generates.**

We hear from some a muffled protest to every appeal on behalf of the Scripture. The Centre Party especially will counter the cry, "Back to the Bible!" by saying, "Don't bother about the Bible. Let us get back to Christ, and the spirit of Christ. That is the thing that matters. Never mind about the Bible." Well, my friends how can we get back to Christ except it be on the stepping-stones of the precepts and promises and historical facts of the Word of God? What do we know of Christ apart from this blessed Book? I believe with all my heart that Christ is the centre and circumference of this Book. "Search the Scriptures," He said once; "they are they which testify of me." The Bible is God's Broadway to Christ. I want to say this: No man honours Christ who belittles the Bible. I have Scripture behind that statement—Psalm 138: 2—"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." God has magnified His Word above all His Name. Let it loose, and it will generate power!

When King Josiah found the book of the Law and read it, and put it into operation, immediately a Revival broke out in Judah. When Martin Luther found the Bible and read it with prayer, a mighty Reformation swept through Germany. When Wesley and Whitefield were warmed to the Scriptures by

the Moravian prayer meetings, they went forth to preach the Gospel in power, and England was turned upside down. When Moody heard the challenge and went out, humble as he was, not always grammatically correct in speech, but grandly empowered of God, two Continents were revived, and mission fields were replenished. One said of him, "The reason for his phenomenal success in bringing souls to God was—that he believed implicitly in the message he gave. His faith was the faith of a little child. No doubts ever dimmed his faith in the Word of God. To him it was the Truth, the whole Truth." As such he preached the Word, and God honoured him with thousands of souls. So He ever will honour those who are valiant for the Truth.

Consider the China Inland Mission

My heart glows when I think of that Mission, founded by a man who believed the Bible from cover to cover. The C.I.M. was launched in the faith of the Word of God, and if any of its Missionaries swerve from that faith, they quietly retire from the Mission. God honours such a basis of belief, and when others were in the grip of the depression, struggling to keep afloat, the China Inland Mission advanced to the attack by sending two hundred new workers to the Field. That is the power of the Bible. No wonder Mr. Hudson Taylor once said, "No part of the Book is unworthy of our credit." The blessing of God is for any who will believe the Scriptures. I tell you, there is a lack of power in many pulpits to-day, and it is due

to this fact—the lack of authority behind the preaching. With many it is no longer "Thus said the Lord," and so there is weakness and decay.

One said to me a little while ago, "In that Church where you are evangelising, I can remember the time when eight hundred people would be packed in week by week, but now, if you gathered the members of the six churches of this city together, you could not number eight hundred among the lot. Why? What is wrong? I will tell you. There is a lack of authority to-day. The cause of the drift is that we are getting away from the authority of the Word of God and the Lordship of Christ." I think that man was right. We should be valiant for the Truth. It generates power.

Then you should be valiant for the Truth upon the earth—

(b) Because of the Purity it Imparts.

John Richard Green tells us that when England became the land of a Book in Elizabeth's reign, "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation. Its literary effects were great, but far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. The whole temper of the people felt the change. A new conception of life, a new moral and religious pulse spread through every class." The Bible flowed through England like a pure river of living water amidst the pollutions of sin.

Saint Augustine—before he became a saint—read Romans 13: 13, 14, and it cut him to the quick, and purged him from his awful lust. In after years he testified, "I take a

whole Christ for my Saviour; I take a whole Bible for my staff; I take the whole Church for my fellowship; and I take the whole world for my parish."—A purified man indeed!

John Bunyan, of the foul lips and filthy heart, came in contact with the Scripture, and there found a new birth in righteousness from the words, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." From thence John Bunyan "lived in the Book."

I remember being camped with a corporal on a wind-swept ridge in France in 1916. He was a worldly man. I expect you would call him a sinful man, a bad man. One night he was out, and I opened my New Testament and—by the light of a candle—was reading a chapter. It must have been about 8 o'clock when I received a sudden call to attend to some duty, and unconsciously left my Testament open on a box. I came back an hour later, and, forgetting about the Testament, rolled into my blankets and went to sleep. About 12 o'clock I was awakened by two men bringing in the drunken corporal. After a while—it might have been ten minutes—I awoke with a start to hear the corporal crying like a child. "Oh, my God, have mercy! My God, forgive me! My God, have mercy!" The tears were running down his face, and the sobs breaking in his voice. I hurried to him, saying, "What's the matter, old chap?" "Oh, Sergeant, did you do it? Did you leave that New Testament there?" "I don't know what you mean," I replied. "I must have forgotten all about it." Then he told me. "I came in about 9 o'clock and looked at the open New Testament, and my sister's dying

words flashed from it,—the last words she said on her death-bed. I went out and drank myself into a stupor. Can God forgive me?" There on that wind-swept ridge in France the corporal repented that night. It was the purifying power of the Word of God.

I tell you, Modernists' books will not do that. I have seen the power of the Word in places where all sham must be put away. On the battlefield some men found comfort in the Bible, and purity from its precepts. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4: 12).

Again, you should be valiant for the Truth upon the earth—

(c) Because of the Peace it Bestows.

Not so long ago a young lady came out in one of my Missions, and said to me, "Mr. Ridley, I'm full of doubts. I'm a backslider." I said to her, "Have you ever been truly converted?" "Yes, I was a Christian once, but I read a book in which there was much good, and I think the writer was a good man, but he said there were many fables in the Old Testament—perfect fables, nothing else—and I believed him. Since I believed him and doubted the Bible I have lost my peace." She was in the grip of unrest that night, and I pleaded with her to trust the Book that Jesus trusted, and to come back to it. We reasoned there, and prayed together. The following night she came out as a backslider and confessed Christ. Then on the last night

of the Mission she took my hand, and said, "It's all different now. I thank God I'm happy. It was a dreadful time." What a solemn warning! Doubts of the Bible rob the believer of peace.

Henry Drummond knew it: On his death-bed he said to Sir William Dawson, "I'm going back to the Bible, to believe it and receive it as I did at the first. I can live no longer on uncertainties. I am going back to the faith of the Word of God." Men and women, you cannot live peacefully on uncertainties. You want the authoritative Word of God to rest on. There is peace in the Word of God.

I would like to read to you the death-bed testimony of Rev. Benjamin Parsons: "My mother was mighty in Scriptures; she had a text for everything, and she appealed to them on all points. She died when I was about fifteen years of age; and from that time I resolved that God's Book should be my directory in faith and practice; and it has saved me from ten thousand moral and spiritual snares. It has always been my judge of right and wrong, of heresy and of orthodoxy. To every invitation to forsake Christ and this plain Gospel, my reply has been, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' And now that I am dying, I find that I have built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail." What rock? The impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture!

When Charlotte Elliott, the far-famed writer of "Just as I am without one plea," was dying at 82 years of age, a friend bent

over her and said to her, "Let not your heart be troubled." "But my heart is not troubled," she replied; "my mind is full of the Bible."

Men can have their theories; they can follow the Modern thought and scholarship of this age with all its deviations from the Bible, but when I am passing hence, if He should tarry, I want to pass out with the Words of Scripture in my mind, the sword of the Spirit in my hand, and my favourite text upon my lips, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Then I shall not fear "the valley of the shadow of death."

Oh, friends, be valiant for the Truth upon the earth, and then, when you come to the close of life's day, may it be said of you, as was written of Mr. Valiant-for-the-Truth by Bunyan: "After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-the-Truth was taken with a summons by the same post. When he understood it, he called his friends and said, 'I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles, who now will be my Rewarder.' When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river side, into which, as he went, he said, 'Death, where is thy sting!' and as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side." "Valiant for the Truth upon the earth!"