

THE HARVEST WORK WORLD-WIDE

THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

THIS ASSOCIATION sprang up spontaneously and gradually during the past thirty years, but particularly during the past ten years. It is composed of thinking Christian people of various ages who are studying the Bible reverently and profitably. There are no limitations as to membership, except such as could be properly applied to any true Christian: (1) Faith in God as the great Creator and Heavenly Father; (2) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the world's Redeemer; (3) Faith in the Bible – that it is the inspired Message of God, respecting His will and purposes in connection with mankind; (4) A clean and honorable life.

Our Association finds this platform broad enough for all true Christians, regardless of all denominational lines, quirks and frills. We have no bondage, and any one is as free to leave the classes as to enter them. Indeed, following the example of the early Church in this as well as in other matters, we avoid any special manner of joining these classes, or any special enrollment, or any special commitment as to faith and practise other than the broad principles already mentioned.

The INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION has classes in nearly every city in many countries, and you may also desire to know about these and their relationship to each other and to the Association.

Each class of the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION is independent, manages its own affairs, conducts its own meetings, and provides for its own expenses. The Association provides public instructors and ministers to lecture on the Bible, and to give suggestions as to the methods of the primitive Church, and as

to the best means of conducting Berean Bible Classes. No Class is obliged to have these lectures, nor to have the literature which the Association publishes for their assistance. They all do, however, find it very convenient to avail themselves of these helps to Bible study; and when requested, the Association provides the assistance to the extent of their ability – subject to the limitations and the accessibility of the classes, and the condition of its treasury funds.

As for the personnel of the classes, they are from all walks of life – laborers and physicians, pupils and teachers, housewives and society people. They are mostly thoughtful, but have been dissatisfied for years, and have been feeling after God, and seeking to satisfy their hungry souls. They are from all denominations – Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Episcopalians, Jews; and a large percentage were once agnostics. These include all nationalities, also: English, Scotch, Irish, French, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Indeed, we find that all over the world there is an intelligent class who hunger after God, righteousness and Truth, and who have nothing satisfactory in any of the creeds, but are now finding a soul-satisfying portion in the Bible itself.

Here, as elsewhere, we are asked if these classes are confined to America. We say, "No, indeed!"

Throughout Great Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, India, China, Japan, Australia, South Africa, these classes are to be found, as well as in Canada and the United States. Indeed, the original charter of the Association was a British one, the office being in London. The international character of the work is the reason for that feature of the Association's name. **[R5156 : page 7]**

It is well understood that many of these Bible Students were unsatisfied when they studied the Bible from various denominational standpoints, and that they are now satisfied, and we are asked how we account for this. Do we use the same Bible? or how comes it that

Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, etc., can gain a clearer light in the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION Studies than in their own denominational lines and classes?

There is a difference. Each denomination seeks to uphold its own traditions of the past, some of which are true and some false. But in our methods all denominational predilections are ignored. We pause not to inquire what Brother Calvin or Brother Wesley taught, nor what others taught before them or since. We go back to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles and Prophets, and ignore every other teaching. True, all denominations claim more or less to do this, but they are more or less handicapped by their traditions and creeds. They look through colored spectacles. We ignore all those and strive to view the Words of Inspiration in the light of the context only, or in the reflected light from other passages of Scripture.

There is another reason why our position is blessed of God – the time mentioned in the Scriptures when the wise ones of God's people are to understand is here. The Scriptures show what all people are beginning to realize clearly – that we are in the dawn of the New Dispensation. All the wonderful inventions of the last eighty years corroborate the testimony that these are the foregleams of a New Dispensation; and that now, when these earthly blessings are increasing, is the time when God promised that He would give special enlightenment respecting His Word and Plan, which He declares He purposely kept under a veil, a partial mystery. The Mystery of God is to be finished, completed, and the full Plan of God is to be revealed in this New Dispensation already dawning.

We are also asked, "Is the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION affiliated with any of the regular organizations or creeds?"

It is not. We purposely avoid all such trammels of thought. Nevertheless, we are sympathetic with all Christian people of every creed. We are realizing that the various denominations were

organized, not for the purpose of dividing and distracting the Lord's Flock, but each with an endeavor to find the light and Truth. We urge Christians to ignore all sectarian fetters and fancies, and point out that there is but one Church, and that there is but one Head of the Church.

Our public meetings are preferably held in large auditoriums, opera houses, etc., for these prove to be common meeting places for people of all faiths, and those without any denominational bias – all who are Truth seekers, not satisfied with the husks upon which they have been endeavoring for some time to feed.

We are often told that considerable interest and comment attaches to the fact that our Association uniformly advertises its meetings with "Seats free and no collections." This has become quite a trade-mark with our Association, because it is so different from the usual practise; and an explanation was requested as to the object of this, and as to how we get along without money, or how money is raised to meet the expenses, which are often quite large.

As thinking people, we have for years noticed that the money question has been the burning question in nearly all religious meetings. The Church members are usually assessed up to the extent of their willingness, or more, and the public collections are specially taken to "milk the goats" – to get money from the worldly. We do not find this method to have Scriptural sanction, and we are seeking to follow the teachings and example of Jesus and the Apostles.

The work started along the lines of these examples thirty years ago seems to commend itself to all Bible students. They received help freely; they are glad to extend assistance to others without money, without price, without collections. Nor are collections found to be necessary. The Association receives whatever contributions are sent in to it for the carrying on of the work. Such moneys are not put up as Foundation Funds, nor consumed in expensive buildings, but are used promptly, freely, in the dissemination of free literature and

in providing free public meetings. The Association is content to spend what the Lord thus sends to it, and does not go into debt, or make appeals for more money.

Each local class, in arranging for public meetings, follows the same course. Nevertheless, in the case of the new classes, or those financially weak, the general Association helps with the expenses. All meetings conducted by the Association's representative speakers, and under its auspices, are strictly free.

"Since you are not gathering people into different denominations, and since your INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION has no creed but the Bible, what would you say that your Association aims to gather the people into, and what reply would you make if one should charge you with trying to build up a new denomination at the expense of others?" may be asked.

Our Association endeavors to bring all Christian people into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as His members. We recognize that the different denominations contain true people of God, and we are in full sympathy with such, and are glad to cooperate with them in any manner, for the furtherance of the Lord's work in harmony with the Scriptures. Our only opposition to sectarianism is that it attempts to divide God's people, insists upon the theories of the Dark Ages, and refuses to recognize the Bible as paramount in authority. We urge Christian people to stand for the Divine Character, Plan and Word, even though this should mean opposition and persecution from those of the sectarian spirit.

The INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION labors specially for Christian unity, on the Bible basis, in harmony with the words of the Apostle, that "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body." – I Cor. 12:13.

THE PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION

This is an affiliated association organized to conduct the interests and affairs of the Household of Faith in New York State, and from that centre, according to the requirement of the laws of that State. It guides the interests of the Bible Students as respects the holding of Public Meetings, supplying speakers and literature freely.

THE WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY

Is the PARENT organization, through which the moneys for all parts of the work are supplied. To it all voluntary donations for the work should be made.

Brother CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL is President of all three of these organizations. Newspapers and the public frequently refer to him by the titles "Reverend," "Mr." and "Doctor"; but he prefers to be known as "Brother" or "Pastor," because these are Bible terms.

There are great truths that pitch their shining tents
Outside our walls, and though but dimly seen
In the gray dawn, they will be manifest
When the light widens into perfect day.

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