

BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

VOLUME 46

SEPTEMBER, 1901

NUMBER 9

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"GOD'S WILL BE DONE, NOT OURS."

With such words on his lips William McKinley, President of the United States, yielded up his life to God. It is a solemn moment in the history of the nation. No words can describe the deep impressions of the past few days. When the first

telegrams came that the President had been assassinated, it was like the shock of an earthquake, especially as it was believed then that he was dead. Strong men wept in the streets, and the whole people seemed benumbed with horror. The dreadful event was surrounded with every element of dramatic intensity. The publicity of the occasion, as the Chief Magistrate stood in the great Fair surrounded by an immense multitude; the cruel treachery of his assassin; the courage and rare self-control of the noble

victim; his first lovely thought of instant tenderness for his wife; his second to protect his murderer, and last with a touch of characteristic courtesy that no Chesterfield ever surpassed, a word of regret that he should have brought trouble to the Fair, recalling Sir Phillip Sidney's definition of a gentleman, "High

erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy;" then, the quick grapple of medical science and surgical skill with impending death—all these things are burned in forever upon the memory of those who have lived through it. The daily and hourly bulletins of the physicians have been watched with prayers

and tears and fear and great joy in every city and hamlet and remote country side; at first with trembling solicitude, then with faint hope, then with confidence and jubilant delight and thanksgiving; now comes the end, and the awful shadow of the King of Terrors seems to overhang the land. Out of the dark cloud his own dying words are the best, "God's will be done, not ours." President McKinley was popular in no ordinary degree; now mere popularity has been transformed



into the reverential love of the whole people. Political and class hatred is hushed, and one great tide of sorrow rolls from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Nations and their rulers have brought fitting homage to the illustrious sufferer—at his death an uncrowned king in the Parliament of man. Christendom is



ARGENTINE COWBOYS.

at Buenos Aires, as the Apostles began at Jerusalem, and reaching out to the uttermost part of his vast parish. One thing that came to encourage him last year was a letter from Osvaldo Magnasco, Minister of Public Instruction, in the Argentine Republic, about the Bible. Here are a few sentences from his letter. They might well be hung up in every schoolhouse in North and South America. "*There is no book outside of this book.*" . . . "*Our people must be built up with its teaching, and the book must be upon the tables of our homes and on the desks of our schools.*" . . . "*The children of ancient Rome learned to spell from the text of their fundamental law—the Twelve Tables.*" . . . "*Our children should learn to read from the pages of the book; the fountain of eternal health; the key to all progress.*"

When the chief officers of the government see thus the value of the Bible we may hope that the Argentine Republic will endure. Its constitution and laws are much like our own. If we can give them our own Bible they have "*the key to all progress.*"

THE EDITOR.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

By Ethelbert D. Warfield, LL.D., President of Lafayette College.

THERE are a great many theories of education, and there was never a time when educational theories were so much debated as the present. All the inheritances of the past are being laid before us and reshaped for contemporary service. And every effort of reason and imagination is being called forth for the invention of new methods. But in all

the ebb and flow of opinion there are a few constant quantities. Among them are the ever growing recognition of the fact that education means a great deal more than special training in some one department of knowledge and of the immense educative force contained in the great literary classics.

The first of these rests on the well-established principle that education means the development of the powers of the individual, and that, as these powers are various, so education must be multifiform, especially adapted to the training of the mind to think clearly, of the emotions to act nobly, and the will to resolve rightly. These factors in education may be combined in infinite variety, but in the end

they always come to the old summary, that true education means the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the individual.

The educative force which is generated by the great classics is one of those phenomena which can be proved by experience better than they can be demonstrated by argument. Some able men still resist the overwhelming evidence which the accumulations of centuries bear to this fact. The simplest explanation is that these great writings hold the mirror up to life so perfectly that men beholding in them what is best and noblest and truest in man are charmed and chained by them. The qualities which make such writings live are not always the same. Simplicity, directness, and elemental force are especially characteristic of some; sublimity and supreme imaginative sweep of others. Thus the Iliad and the early chapters of Genesis fall in the one class; the *Œdipus* of Sophocles and the Messianic rhapsodies of Isaiah in the other. And these instances suggest, without attempting to exhaust, the variety of the causes upon which the enduring power of high literature depends. All our educational institutions rests upon a recognition of the importance of the classic spirit; even in professional schools we frequently find a work retained in the curriculum because it is a "classic," even when it is really out of date, and has to be hedged about with all sorts of limitations and explanations. This is because it has certain qualities, nobility of conception, breadth of view, proportion and style hard to be replaced and to be surrendered only with a sense of serious loss. Among such works may be mentioned Euclid's *Geometry*, Aristotle's *Politics*, Blackstone's *Commentaries*.

Now, the Bible has a supreme claim in our educational institutions as one of the world's great classics. It has a claim of this character in its original tongues and also in its English version. The Old Testament is the one great body of Hebrew literature and constitutes as noble a monument to the literary genius of the Hebrew people as dignifies the history of any nation of antiquity. The New Testament, if it does not represent one of the greatest periods of Greek letters, is a body of Hellenic literature of great importance in the history of thought and language, while the English Bible is a piece of English prose literature of unsurpassed excellence. From a purely literary point of view the Bible is an indispensable part of the education of every English-speaking man and woman. In the famous scheme which Professor Francis A. March, LL.D., L.H.D., the great pathfinder in the long-neglected domain of English language and literature, developed for the English department of Lafayette College, the study of English classics occupies a prominent place. The authors chosen for special study in courses extending through three years are Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spencer, Bacon, Milton, and Bunyan. This is supplementary to the very extensive study of the English Bible which has always been made so prominent a feature of the Lafayette curriculum. It will be noted that biblical influences occupy a prominent place in this series, and the way in which the biblical influences are recognized is well illustrated by the comment on the treatment of Bunyan, "his diction is compared with other standard works, and especially with the Bible." This is emphatic as to the place of the Bible as a masterpiece of English language. As a prose masterpiece it falls into its place alongside of Shakespeare's and Spencers' poetry, and becomes the inspiration of Milton's mighty music and Bunyan's melodious prose. When placed beside Bacon's prose, so nearly contemporary with it, it is no dispraise of that great master of our mother tongue to say that for richness, variety, and simplicity the Bible surpasses the best he ever wrote.

But has it not been the highest praise of every writer of good English this hundred years to say he formed his style on Shakespeare and the Bible? Let us pass from the form to the content. It is here that the Bible simply as literature rises to the highest level. It is prose. But it conceals within its prose many original poetic elements. Our English Bible is not poetry. It has many of the poetic elements of the original. It abounds in imagination, dramatic movement, and structural peculiarities such as parallelism and antithesis. And by all the richness of its matter, the splendor of its imaginative narrative, the haunting music of its repeated refrains, the pungency of its epigrams, the overmastering emotion of its prophetic passages, the melting tenderness of its appeals to the heart, the everlasting power of its

promises, it lays hold upon every one who has any capacity for the appreciation of the expression of thought in language.

As language is only the vehicle of thought the final estimate of the value of the literature represented by the Bible is dependent on the value of the thought which it contains. Recent translations which cast the lyric and epic and dramatic poetry of the Bible in proper poetic form have done much to make us understand its original beauty and grandeur; the researches among the monuments in Egypt, Palestine, and Babylonia have done much to enable us to more graphically picture to ourselves the life portrayed in the historical portions; but only the Bible itself when studied with close attention and for its essential content can give us any idea of its literary power. A man confined wholly to its pages would have no inconsiderable knowledge of human history and a deep insight into human nature; he would gain a beautiful conception of nature and of nature's relation to its Creator and to man; he would have all the guidance necessary for a happy life and the only account of man's origin and destiny; above all, he would possess the means for the culture of his highest capacities on earth and a blessed assurance of immortality in heaven.

None of the classics named above have so rich a gallery of portraits as the Bible. How does Lear pale before Abraham, and Hamlet before Saul? Can any of Shakespeare's kings be placed beside Moses or David? Are any of the Canterbury pilgrims so real to us as the long line of characters whom we meet in the books of Judges and Samuel? What creation of Spencer's genius moves us as does Job? Where shall we look for men so human yet so God-like as Joseph and Moses, as Paul and John? To have lived in this world and not to have known the men and women of the Bible, not to have thought its thoughts, not to have felt its great emotions, not to have shared its hopes, is indeed to have lived in vain.

And we see that even in looking at the Bible as literature we have not stopped with the ideal of intellectual training. Shall we read Shakespeare only to be charmed with his diction, or to count the Saxon and Roman words, or to study his use of assonance, alliteration, and rhyme? Shall we not rather weep with Constance over the afflictions of her sweet boy and of herself, rise up with Henry of Monmouth to a nobler manhood, share with young Richmond his hopes for a settled kingdom, and delight in his latest dramas in the portrayal of the virtues of forbearance and forgiveness, of generosity and self-control? In short, no one can teach the great English classics aright without inspiring the student with a moral purpose and a love for the sweet and wholesome things of life. Shall the Bible be used in any other way?

But the question still remains whether the Bible should be used for the purpose for which it exists. If it has so much value linguistically, intelligently, and morally, can it fail to fulfill its true purpose, soul culture? "Ye shall teach these things diligently unto your children," is the Old Testament injunction; "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life," is that of the New; "The Holy Scripture is the faultless, most true, most perfect and most holy law of God which it is the duty of all men to learn, to know, to defend, and to observe," is the declaration of John Wycliffe, to whom we owe the first English translation of the Bible. I maintain the claim of the Bible to be taught in every school and college, not as a monument of English prose, not as a great world classic, but as the Word of God.

This brings us back to the principle with which we began. Education is multiform. We may not neglect physical, intellectual, moral, or spiritual culture. The Bible is the only final standard of spiritual training. It is the great essential support to our civilization which claims to be Christian. Many materials for other kinds of culture are available, but the Bible alone can give the spiritual education demanded by our whole civic, industrial, and religious life. To neglect the diligent use of the Bible is, therefore, to imperil our institutions and stultify ourselves.—*The Presbyterian Banner*.

THE Rev. Canon Gore, the distinguished English clergyman and scholar, in addressing, recently, the London Methodist Ministers' Meeting said that the great underlying unity lay in their common devotion to their common Lord, in the one Lord and in the operation of the one Spirit and in the common appeal to the Holy Scriptures. For his own part, he believed there was nothing at the present time which gave them a better hope of closer union than the common and altogether undenominational study of Scripture. He saw growing up all over Europe a real and reverent study of Scripture, as well as an irreverent and irreligious criticism. The real and reverent criticism or study of the Bible helped him, no matter from what denomination it came.

THE biblical scholarship of to-day is no doubt varied and extensive, but in the past there have been many striking instances of profound acquaintance with the Scriptures, quite equal to or surpassing present-day scholarship, as the following instances collated half a century ago will testify.

Josephus testifies of his countrymen, that if asked concerning the laws of Moses they could answer as readily as their names.

Erasmus, speaking of Jerome, says: "Who ever learned by heart the whole Scriptures, or imbibed or meditated on them as he did?"

Tertullian, after his conversion, was engaged night and day in reading the Scriptures, and got much of them by heart.

Of one Marcus, a primitive Christian, who was well instructed in the morning of life, it is recorded that he became so expert in the Scriptures when he was but a youth that he could repeat the whole of the Old and New Testaments. Of one or two others it is said, that being men of good memories, they got the Scriptures by heart, only by hearing them continually read by others; they not being able to read a single word.

Bonaventure wrote out the Scriptures twice, and learned most of them by heart.

Zuinglius wrote out St. Paul's Epistles, and committed them to memory.

Cromwell, Earl of Essex, in his journey to and from Rome, learned all the New Testament by heart.

Bishop Ridley thus attests his own practice, and the happy fruit of it: "The walls and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness, that there I learned by heart almost all the Epistles; of which study, although in time a greater part of it was lost, yet, the sweet savor thereof, I trust, I shall carry with me to heaven."

Gregory Lopez, a Spanish monk in Mexico, in the sixteenth century, committed to memory both the Old and New Testaments in the short space of four years, spending four hours a day in memorizing them.

Viscount Carteret, who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1724, could repeat from memory the whole of the New Testament, from the first chapter of Matthew to the end of Revelation. It was astonishing to hear him quote very long passages from it with as much accuracy as if he were reading a book.

The celebrated Witsius was able to recite almost any passage of Scripture, in its proper language, together with its context and the criticism of the best commentators.

The Rev Thomas Threlkeld, of Rochdale, in Lancashire (England), might have been justly called a living concordance to the Holy Scriptures. If three words only were mentioned, except perhaps those words of mere connection which occur in hundreds of passages, he could immediately, without hesitation, assign the chapter and verse where they could be found; and, inversely, on mentioning the chapter and verse, he could repeat the words. This power of retention enabled him with ease to make himself master of many languages. Nine or ten he read with critical skill. It is affirmed by a friend who lived near him, and who was on intimate terms with him, that he was well acquainted with every language in which he had a Bible or New Testament. His powers of reference and quotation were as great and ready in the Hebrew and Greek as in the English.