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THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN THE HOME

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the man called of humanity; called of God; called to help the race, called to help God in a service fundamental to creation.

He is not set to teach chemistry, biology, philosophy, history, art, literature; he is set to teach that which lies behind philosophy and history, to grapple and interpret the spirit of which these are the utterance. He is not even sent to teach the Bible but rather the living spirit behind the Bible; not the book of Isaiah, but Isaiah; not the teachings of Jesus, but Jesus. Other educators educate men to become dentists or engineers, or lawyers or chemists or accountants or doctors or preachers; he must educate them into eternal life. Determining men's structure and capacity he must lead out and adjust him to the bewildering universe. With clear knowledge of how he relates to the earth beneath and with the horror of a voice sounding, "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return," he must lift this creature out of the mud and somehow escape him into a spiritual universe. With undaunted courage and superb assurance he must thread his own wild way out and beyond the shock of crashing suns, out and beyond the swirl of glittering systems, through the fire mists and the drift of milky-ways until he shall lay hold of the Eternal, until he shall win the High God from His blazing throne and bring Him down to earth, shall crowd Him into the limits of a human aspiration and declare to a waiting, wondering humanity, "This here is Thy God and ye are His children."

THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN THE HOME.

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In a symposium on the theme, "Is the Bible More Familiar Now than Formerly," published in *The Biblical World*, (April, 1903), William Ingraham Haven, of the American Bible Society, says, "I am persuaded that in the average Christian home the Bible is crowded from its pre-eminence in the reading of the family by the omnipresent magazine and paper; and that where it is read it is not read as it used to be, lovingly, absorbingly, for guidance and inspiration, as if life hung upon it and

its message alone could direct in the daily choices and the great crises, and comfort and strengthen in the hours of testing and sorrow."

Following this Mr. Haven expresses the conviction that while the critical knowledge of the Bible has increased many fold, the devotional use of it has waned.

At the meeting of The Religious Education Association in 1903, President George B. Stewart, of Auburn Theological Seminary, said, "You know that the homes cannot be depended upon for giving the children the instruction in the Bible which they need."

One reads that Herbert Spencer has complained of the "utter failure of education as it is now conducted to create any high and dominant ideals." Too largely we have secularized education, and in doing so we have measurably secularized even the Christian home. It is estimated that not above fifteen per cent of families that are professedly Christian have family worship. We have traveled far from the idyllic piety of the Scotch "Cotter's Saturday Night."

We have traveled far from "scenes like these," from which Burns declares, with profound social insight, "old Scotia's grandeur springs." Life has become complex and its demands are strenuous. "The saint, the husband, and the father" of the poet's picture is now the prosaic man of business, rushing from his home in the early morning for "the limited" that shall carry him to his city office; lunching down town; home for a hasty dinner at six; then off again for the club, the theater, the postponed business engagement, or possibly the prayer meeting. To the mother has come a round of social and religious duties in addition to her domestic ones. "The elder bairns" do not come "drapping in," as Burns pictures them; the boys are in factories, stores, shops; the girls are in schools and offices. Engagements are urgent; we live by the mill-whistle; life presses hard; minutes are precious; the idyllic days are gone. And with them there has gone the family altar, one of the noblest of our inheritances from a remote past.

Rural families are no better off in hours suitable to devotion than city ones. Mechanical devices making it possible for one man to do the work of ten have saved no time for prayer. Rather they have tempted the farmer to attempt twenty men's work. As to the telephone, it knows no reverence. The "auto" saves no time for prayer. If it makes for its owner five times

the speed of his horse it must run ten times as far on business, and be in commission for many a pleasure trip besides. The strenuous life has found the farm as well as the factory.

THE PASSING DAY OF REST.

As to the old-time Sunday, it is gone. The Jewish Sabbath is an impossibility under American conditions, but the Christian Sunday ought not to be wholly impossible. However, to many a business man and working man there is no Sunday. Front to front with the bread-and-butter problem he is on the railway or the trolley; in a seven-day drug store or hotel; patrolling the factory or cleaning up for an early Monday run. Our complicated church life even militates against the Sunday home life of the most Christian people, and leaves but little time or energy for the ardent church-man's meditation and prayer. The Sunday exploitation of great masses of the people by railroad and street car corporations for purely mercenary purposes under the guise of pleasure and recreation is a menace to our civilization. Parks, concerts, dance halls and theaters swell the Sunday receipts of the street car corporations, and railway excursions from the cities into the country and from the country into the cities swell those of the railway corporations. To the jaded pleasure seeker there come no thoughts of hearth-stone devotions, or reading and prayer within his own closed doors. It is a vital question, not alone to the religious educator, but to every educator, this of the Sunday exploitation of the people in the interests of corporation dividends.

RELIGIOUS TRANSITION.

Beyond all this, and quite as serious as all this, is the fact of our transition. We are in the middle of the stream. We cannot go back to the old shores where our fathers read their Bible and said their prayers. We fear to go forward for we do not know how deep the waters are. Today the man of average education and intelligence finds a gap between his world-view and what he imagines the Bible to teach. The Puritans and the Pilgrims had no such difficulty. Their Bible and their world went well together. We have hit upon different times. To us the laboratory seems to teach one way and the Bible another. The scientific lecturer, on the platform and in his books; the popular magazine; the daily paper, have caught the language of the laboratory, and have popularized

it. *Meanwhile the pulpit, not always, but too frequently, has attempted to browbeat the laboratory back into the sixteenth century.* Large sections of the religious press have joined in this attempted reactionary browbeating. The laboratory has found its own way of striking back; has conquered the schools and colleges; has indoctrinated one whole generation with its new world-views; is fast indoctrinating another; and is predominant everywhere in academic circles. The average intelligent man of affairs, heir of traditional views of the Bible, dominated by modern views of geology, biology, history, astronomy, ethnology, sociology, finds himself perplexed. In his perplexity he feels himself quite unfitted to maintain the Bible in his home as the Scotch Cotter did it.

Face to face with these conditions, very humbly, I make the following suggestions:

THE BIBLE IN FAMILY LIFE.

The case is not so desperate as it seems. A high type of Christian ethics is being taught and practiced in many a home where the Bible is not formally read. Of the two, a Bible in word formally uttered, or a Bible in life practically uttered, God give us the latter. Many a father and mother who do not pray in the presence of their children, pray for them, and if they do not read the Bible with them, they live it with them. Christian faith and ethics in the life is the primary and essential thing. To this the formal reading of the Bible may be highly contributory, but not indispensable. Christianity is a spirit and a life, to which the Bible is a chief medium, but not the only medium.

THE BIBLE IN GENERAL LITERATURE.

Into thousands of homes there is being carried a world of literature, juvenile and otherwise, infused with Biblical teaching and Christian inculcation. In the long run selected lessons from the Bible, accompanied by such illustrative and expository material as our various great Sunday-school publishing houses are putting out, and through the young people of the Bible Schools, putting into the homes, have a wholesome influence, and it is by no means inconsiderable. So far as it goes, it is a fragmentary Bible in the home. In the course of a very few years much of the literature and history of the Bible and the whole body of its ethical and spiritual teaching may be thus carried into the home. The opportunity for the reaching

of homes through the medium of the Sunday school is great, and should be fostered and enlarged by every possible means. Every added child from a new home means some portion of the Bible sent into that home. Every advancement in Sunday-school efficiency, in the selection of lessons, in their proper adaptation to the needs of the pupils, and in their proper exposition, means more of Bible reading and teaching in the home. Graded lessons for graded schools are in demand, and this should suggest to wise fathers and mothers such an adaptation of the various portions of the Bible itself to their children's needs as were not thought of a generation ago.

The home department of the Sunday school may also be made an effective agent in the restoration of Bible study in the home. Through this the pastor and his co-workers may not only bring the Bible to the home but lend guidance and fostering care to a systematic and intelligent study of it.

THE BIBLE AND EDUCATED PEOPLE.

One of our most pressing problems, and perhaps our most difficult one, is to bring the modern Bible and the modern man successfully together. I spoke of this modern man above as in a state of perplexity. Many of our most reverent and thoughtful students in our colleges and universities pass through a period of doubt, some becoming indifferent if not skeptical, others finding their way through to firmer faith. The period is an exceedingly critical one, arising not infrequently from lack of co-ordination between the young man's or woman's newly acquired academic beliefs and his traditionally acquired biblical ones. Never does a soul need wise and sympathetic guidance more than at such a time. There are doubts that spring out of one's very genuineness and open-mindedness. They may be the normal steps of intellectual development. "I have learned," said an aged teacher, "when a young man is in doubt not only to approach him with sympathy, but with a great deal of reverence, because I have found that the great things of life are working themselves out there." If such young people remain in a state of doubt, or become skeptical, it is evident that they will not give the Bible a central place in their future homes.

Nothing but the modern biblical teaching and viewpoint can save such souls. Their biblical studies must be co-ordinated with their philosophical and scientific and historical

ones. To minimize their difficulties is to insult them; to recommend obscuratism is to invite their contempt; to insist on biblical teachings and interpretations which they have outgrown is to drive them into deeper doubt. It is possible to save them, however, by a sympathetic presentation of the Bible itself rather than this or that traditional dogma about it—a natural, human body of books, with their supernatural divine element; the Old Testament the history and literature of a great and unique people, unique in their glorious ethical monotheism and the tremendous struggle it cost them; the New Testament the fitting literary garment that gathers itself around the greatest and most gracious man that ever lived, an incomparable production because he is incomparable, human in its form, divine in the expression of his Deity. Let Mr. Spurgeon's "John Ploughman" have John Ploughman's Bible, and let the aged mother by the chimney corner have the Bible that she sees and receives as she can.

But when the doubt is already there, then we must have the university man's Bible for the university man. That is, there must be such a modern presentation of the Bible as he, the modern man, can receive. There is no other salvation for him. And who shall say that the scholar's view of the Bible, though newer, is not also truer, than John Ploughman's?

THE READING THAT HARMS.

There are some who should not read the Bible as a matter of family worship in their homes. Should a profane man read the Bible in the presence of his children? Should a hopeless drunkard read it? Or mere man of the world, a dollar-getter, a rich fool with nothing to commend him but his bursting barns? Should a man whose wife distrusts his loyalty to her, and whose daughters smother their contempt for him, read the Bible in their presence? There's many a mother who prays in secret for her children because with her own hands she cannot build the family altar, and the hands that should help she knows would profane it. In such cases there is a question back of that of the Bible in the home. It is the question of Christ in the heart and life. There have been times and religions that made no ethical demands on men. One could build his altar, and bring his sacrifice, and say his prayers, and live as he lusted, and do what he liked. But the Bible calls for goodness when it calls for God, and Christ makes strenuous demands on

those who name his name. In his presence one must be either consistent or silent. In many a home there is silence that there may be consistency.

THE BUSINESS MAN.

Closely related to the university man there is the mystified business man. He has never had such training as would fit him to read Isaiah profitably and with appreciation, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel, or Job, or the legislation of the Pentateuchal books, or the great national anthems popularly called Psalms. The whole of the Old Testament is in a measure a sealed book to him, and much also of the New. Without the recreation of their various historical and literary situations many of the books of the Bible are simply enigmas. Many of the older theories and interpretations rendered the mysteries of the book doubly mysterious. This is especially true of the prophetic and apocalyptic portions of it. Now the time was when many a householder read his Bible through and through from a sense of duty, with perhaps a vague notion that somehow from the reading of it there came to his soul a magical influence. That day is gone. People are saying by their conduct, if not in so many words, "Why should I read what I do not understand?" And indeed why should they? It is our business as teachers and preachers to help them understand.

To meet this condition we need such a literature as we have not. We need not the technical, critical literature of the class-room, or the tedious literature of the commentator. We need the conservative, constructive results of our best and most reverent scholarship, in a literary form as popular and attractive as the average monthly magazine presents, and just enough of it as pertaining to this or that biblical ode or anthem or drama or decalogue or sermon or epistle or apocalypse or gospel or parable or prayer to enable it to speak for itself. Take as an example the Galatian letter. What can the average man, or any other for that matter, do with it without an introduction to it? But let him know of the Jewish-Gentile question, of the attack of the Judaizers on the apostolate of Paul, of their insidious disturbance of his Gentile churches, of his brave stand for liberty in Christ as against enslavement to an outgrown legalism with an impossible cult—let him know this and the little book becomes great and luminous, spiritually insurgent, a veritable, blood-stirring, emancipation proclama-

tion. The historical and doctrinal situations, fairly, popularly presented, are the best commentary. Dr. Richard G. Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible" may be taken as an example in part of all that I am seeking to say.

A final suggestion: In keeping with the above there should be a general agitation among college men for a recognition of biblical work as cultural work of the A. B. grade. In all our church colleges there should be Bible Major courses co-ordinate with all other major courses. Is Isaiah less worthy of the classroom than Homer? Or Moses than Cæsar? Or Luke than Livy? Or Paul than Plato? It is an anomaly of our Christian civilization that it has built colleges with the money of Christians in the name of Christ for primary emphasis on pagan classics, glorifying the beautiful, abandoned Greek gods, and gory Roman ones; shelving meanwhile the really glorious, and equally classical, messages of a chaste and holy monotheism to the ancient world.

SEX EDUCATION IN THE HOME.

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Religion at its best is a spirit in which men live, a spirit of faith, hope and love, of courage, joy and peace, of reverence for truth and the ideals of moral perfection. It is propagated by contagion, i. e., it is "catching," like some diseases, and is transmitted in no other way. Those who have not this spirit can not by any possibility awaken it in others, while those who do possess it are radiating centers of spiritual influence. Ideally, the home is more than a house with the conveniences of civilized life. It is a matrix of spiritual life. The plastic natures of young children there receive their first bias and are given their direction. What is praised there will seem to them praiseworthy, and if they are ever to revere anything it will be because the spirit of reverence for that thing was a part of the atmosphere of their home. Of all the vain notions of this time, so prolific in shallow theories, none is more foolish than the idea that children who are reared in a home where cynicism, irreverence and mockery have taken the place of idealism, can