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THE MINIMUM OF EQUIPMENT ESSENTIAL TO THE RECOGNITION OF A DEPARTMENT OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

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ing the students in their religious work because he is a teacher of the Bible, but because he is genuinely interested in them and in what they are doing.

9. The ideal Biblical department will do something for the community outside the college. This department, more than most, can make a contribution to the life of the town, and it ought to take such activity as a part of its duty. Doubtless the professor of archaeology feels as cordial toward the surrounding community as the professor of Biblical Literature, but the latter can better express his desire to be of aid, and it is his duty, and should be his pleasure, to do it.

Doubtless few departments of Biblical literature attain their ideal standards, but these statements express what all are striving to reach.

THE EQUIPMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

THE MINIMUM OF EQUIPMENT ESSENTIAL TO THE RECOGNITION OF A DEPARTMENT OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

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In considering the standardization of the Department of Biblical Instruction in our colleges it must be remembered that Bible study has not been in the past upon just the same footing as other academic subjects. The religious value of the Bible has been so much in the foreground that it has overshadowed every other consideration of its place in serious study. This has brought with it a certain advantage in that the Bible has held a unique position of respect in the minds of most people, but it has also hampered its free course as an academic study in two ways. First, religion has been supposed to be taken care of by other agencies than the curriculum, and, secondly, the method ordinarily employed by those other agencies in treating the Bible has obscured its rich value as a part of the world's greatest literature and as affording the best of academic discipline.

Because the Bible has thus been regarded in the past there are two decided trends in the wrong direction in many of our colleges where Biblical instruction is given. The first of these is the old idea that, of course, students should know about the Bible, but that any good Christian person with ordinary intelligence and devotion

is quite capable of teaching it. This idea is fast passing away. The old method of having Bible study farmed out to four different professors of other departments, one for each college class, and the work assigned for one hour a week, is already almost defunct. But in some quarters the one hour a week idea still survives, and the opinion continues that it can be handled by someone whose main business is to teach another subject. No Biblical instruction so conducted should be considered as coming within hailing distance of recognition as a department. The reasons are very obvious. No other academic subject, regarded of importance enough to be taught in college, is ever on a sufficiently dignified plane to claim the name of department when thus taught. It is only at most a frill in education. Even if it is granted college credit, the method of instruction does not come up to departmental standards. No one-hour course can possibly produce the results that a three or four hour course accomplishes; and no one who teaches any subject as a side issue is likely to put into it his best work. This used to be the method of teaching English. But it has long since been relegated to the museum of antiquities so far as college standards are concerned. To-day any college would be open to ridicule that still clung to this old-fashioned way of teaching English and yet appropriated the name of English Department. We should not make an unwarranted exception of the Bible.

There is another tendency in the wrong direction that clings longer than this first one. In some quarters there is an idea that academic Bible study may well be coupled up with Christian Association work. This is the old notion that special religious agencies should take care of Bible study. The Christian Association has its distinct place in college life, but the minute it steps out of its place it either defeats its own aim or else it belittles the place it is assuming. The distinctive aim of the Christian Association is to be a religious agency emphasizing supremely the devotional side of life. Bible study in the Christian Associations is frankly recognized as putting that phase foremost. Even supposing a young man or woman could be employed as a Y. M. or Y. W. C. A. secretary, who was capable by training and tastes to teach the Bible with the strong intellectual grasp which all subjects in the college curriculum demand, if that person were true to his primary calling of a Christian Association secretary, it would be the religious and devotional side of the teaching which would receive major emphasis. Moreover the very fact of curriculum courses being coupled up with distinctly religious agencies would give the impression to all con-

cerned that they were not of the same character as ordinary academic courses. This obviously does not mean any disparagement of Christian Associations and their needed and most admirable work; nor does it overlook the great advantage obtained when the Christian Associations back up the curriculum courses, using their influence to arouse interest in them; nor does it depreciate the efforts made in some quarters by the Christian Associations in alliance with influential church agencies to establish a chair of Biblical instruction, especially in our state universities, this chair to be occupied by a trained scholar. But any instruction worthy to claim the name of a department in an academic institution must be stamped by its academic character first and foremost. The secretary of a Y. M. or Y. W. C. A. should not be employed to teach academic classes. Therefore such colleges as depend upon either of the above methods in their Biblical instruction should not be considered as maintaining a true department of Biblical Literature.

What, then, are the absolute requisites? There are two main distinctions which it seems to me should be insisted upon. First, there should be at least one instructor whose sole business shall be Biblical teaching. That is, he is to be an expert in this line. No other work is to take precedence over or even to be on an equality with this so far as his time and energies are concerned.

The objection which will be raised by some of our smaller institutions is that where the students are few in number it is too expensive to employ an expert for the few hours of work in Bible, especially if the training required in some other department seems to correlate nicely with that required for Bible study. For example, Greek and Bible, or Philosophy and Ethics and Bible, have often been grouped together. Very often the president himself, who has been a minister, keeps his hand on the teaching side of things by conducting the Bible classes. Why not? Well, in the first place the whole range of Biblical interpretation is such a vast field that if the Greek professor attempts to handle it properly, even in a sufficiently scholarly manner to give an adequate impression to beginners, he will find that the Greek point of contact is only one angle of approach; and if he overemphasizes that side, as a Greek professor is most likely to do, the whole viewpoint is lop-sided. The same thing is true of Philosophy and Ethics. Comparative Religions is of course very closely allied to Philosophy, but the study of comparative religions is the final fruit of Biblical study. So very much must precede as a foundation, that so far as the Biblical department is concerned it should be reserved as one of the higher

electives, save as an instructor's knowledge in that line helps his interpretation of Biblical history and literature. It would be much more reasonable to couple up the History or Literature departments with the Biblical instruction. But there are two arguments against that. These departments as a rule have already more than they can do in a small college and the instructors themselves are for the most part sadly lacking in Biblical vision. When Biblical Literature is prescribed as a minor for one who is majoring in English Literature preparatory to teaching it, the case may assume a different aspect.

The fashion of turning over Biblical instruction to the president of a college is fast disappearing, largely because ministers are no longer the sole incumbents of the presidential office. Even when a trained minister does hold the position, his administrative functions are as a rule too absorbing to allow him to give the kind of steady attention to an academic class which a competent instructor must give. This is usually true also of clergymen called in from the town to take a Biblical class. A clergyman's first business is his church work, even though he may be a scholar. If there are too many classes for one instructor to handle, it might be allowable to call in the assistance of a scholarly clergyman, but the burden of building up interest in the Biblical department should never rest upon his shoulders, for the simple reason that he is an outsider with his main interests elsewhere. And it must be remembered that since the student body is a constantly shifting entity, the building up and holding of interest in any department is a continuous process. And once more to compare the treatment of Bible study and other subjects which are dignified enough to demand a department to themselves, the time is fast passing when any two such subjects can be grouped under one head. The old-fashioned settee which our fresh-water colleges substituted for a chair in the early days of their history is being relegated to the lumber room. Even Chemistry and Physics, and Latin and Greek demand separate instructors. Experts are required for each subject.

But the question arises: How can a small college afford an expert for Bible alone when the hours are necessarily few, and will that expert be contented, if he is a person eager for business? Anyone who knows our field thoroughly will be amused at even the suggestion of such a question, for there is plenty to do in building up a Biblical department even in a small institution, and an alert instructor will find it. I have been told that the department of English Bible in our theological seminaries is one of the most difficult

in which to arouse and hold interest, just because the students assume that they know the English Bible already and will not need to work hard. College Bible has also had the reputation in some places of being a "snap," but it is no "snap" if the instructor does what he ought to with it. Moreover there is no other department in college, unless it be that of Sociology, that can so readily connect up with the needs of the surrounding community. Courses of lectures upon the modern appreciation of the Bible and training classes for Sunday school teachers are in demand and will be more and more according to present indications. This connection with the outside world is of benefit both to the institution and to the instructor himself, to say nothing of the community.

Therefore, for all these reasons we would say that at least one whole instructor is not an exorbitant demand if Biblical instruction in college is to be dignified by the name of a department. This requisite, however, is not at present generally met. In the statistical investigation made two years ago by the national organizations of Christian Associations there are to be found only fifty-two institutions employing the whole time of one or more instructors and one hundred and seventeen employing part time only.

The second distinctive characteristic of a Biblical department should be as regards the nature of the instruction. A college has not a real Biblical department unless Biblical history is upon the recognized plane of history instruction of college grade, and unless Biblical literature is treated with the same scholarly acumen that English or German literature receives. There may still be so-called colleges which approach history and literature from the secondary school point of view, which take one textbook and trot along obediently in the footsteps of the author, as if his words were the oracle of the gods beyond which no further investigation is necessary. Where this is the case, they are ruled out in our consideration. Perhaps this method is not employed in Biblical instruction in many colleges, but in order to make this second requisite clear it is necessary to analyze it a little further.

The study of the Bible may be approached fundamentally from two angles, that of history and that of literature. How is the study of history pursued in a real college? First, from the standpoint of information the college student must grasp the view of the evolution of history rather than simply to learn events and dates. The beginnings of things and the steps of progress, the relation of cause and effect, in other words the philosophy of history enters into his conception. The relation of different movements and races, the

racial significance of certain discoveries and inventions, the international significance of racial expressions of genius are dwelt upon. The college student is taught to look upon history from the large point of view. He gains sweeps of vision. And he must with this broad landscape get a scientific viewpoint from cause to effect, whether his particular phase of interpretation be psychological or economic.

Again, the method of obtaining his information must be the scientific method. Here are certain documents. They are made to speak for themselves. This places the whole subject upon the plane of research work; that is, this is the method, even if the college is too small to pursue very extensive research. The student must work with many authorities at his hand and with at least some translations of the sources. He must make up his own mind concerning the pros and cons of differing points of view. He must not be dependent upon other people's interpretation. He must learn to go to the document itself and make his own interpretations, when the evidence is all in. These are the rudiments of true scholarly discipline, and this is what a college stands for. Of course it necessitates a library. But libraries to-day, sufficient for such work as this, are taken for granted in all higher institutions. Of course the insistence upon such a method in historical study is not for the purpose of turning out scholarly productions in freshman or sophomore year, but for putting the tools into the hands of the students and showing them how to use them. In addition to this historical approach the Bible must be handled as great literature. How is any literature taught according to college standards? There must be a knowledge of the forms of literary style and a comparison of degrees of perfection. There must be a valuation of these forms for the times and an estimate of their influence as mediums of expression for the life of a people.

Now the Bible lends itself wonderfully to these two types of treatment. In my own estimation there is no other group of documents, so easily accessible, which affords such possibilities in strictly historical discipline as the Bible, and so far as its literary value is concerned we have a unique collection of forms all the more valuable because different in many respects from our occidental literatures. We should, indeed, magnify our office as Biblical instructors, proving to other departments how much our work may help theirs from the standpoint of pure scholarly discipline. And we need to do this because of the long-time notion that the Bible is a Sunday school textbook carrying with it a Sunday school flavor. It has

been used so long as a point of departure for moral preachments that the very first task an instructor must face is to free it from this stigma and to raise it to the dignity of superior intellectual training.

Of course many people will ask immediately if we are not thus eliminating its religious value? By no means. If the Bible is allowed to speak for itself as history and literature, it carries with it its religious lessons. For example, no student can compare the two documents, the Biblical flood story and the Babylonian tale, without being impressed by the deep religious value of the former; nor can he read with intelligent literary interpretation the great Thunderstorm Psalm without feeling the impressiveness of the religious message. This is the way students wake up to the religious fascination of the Bible. We are therefore doing religion *per se* a great favor to hold Bible instruction upon this high plane.

There is also a further important argument for the use of this method. It is the only way it can be taught in our public schools, which of course includes the state university as well as secondary schools. To my mind the whole question of the introduction of the Bible once more into our school system is a question of whether public school teachers are able to let the Bible speak for itself, their part being an adequate historical and literary interpretation. Our colleges must be preparing the teachers who can do this. It takes college discipline; no church discipline is as yet sufficient unto the need.

For these reasons, because we need to magnify the importance of the Bible as a historical and literary discipline and because of the influence this is going to have upon the public schools, I, for one, should deplore changing the title with which our department has already gained much ground, this title of course being the Department of Biblical History or Biblical Literature, or both combined. It has been suggested that we might better use the name Department of Religious Education or some similar title covering the field of religion. This it seems to me would defeat our ends, even in trying to secure religious education itself. It is the value of the Bible as history and literature which must just now be emphasized, if we look only to the influence the department is to have within the college itself.

I would also advocate having the Bible required of all students, preferably in sophomore year. By that time a student has come to appreciate the college point of approach and if the work is done properly he will say when he gets to be a senior that he could not have afforded the loss of the mental discipline and insight which

Bible study gave him for what he undertook in junior and senior years. But if it is merely an elective it will naturally be only those few who are attracted to the Bible as a religious book who will be likely to elect the work. Most students before they come to college have not had any historical and literary awakening concerning the Bible. It is this awakening which the required class accomplishes with so many students, who then regard it as a new book and are fired with enthusiasm for it. One of the greatest joys in college teaching is to see a large sophomore required class change its point of view and wake up to the real significance of Bible study within the first three or four weeks of the year. If it is not required and the real character of the work discovered, those who are specializing in history and literature will probably never dream that the Bible courses have anything to do with their chosen field. And then we will lose one of our great opportunities to inoculate the coming high school teachers with the idea that they may legitimately introduce the Bible as literature and history into their work. It is not simply workers in church and Christian associations we want now to train, but teachers of history and literature. This will in the end reflect most advantageously upon the church Bible school and the specialized Christian work of the country.

All of this applies to colleges whose curriculum is aimed to be strictly cultural as well as to those admitting professional courses, for from our cultural colleges a great number of our teachers are drawn. Of course required work could not be expected of a state university, and colleges upon private foundations have here a distinct advantage. Moreover if the work is not required, it would seem hardly worth while to have a department at all in very many of our smaller colleges, the number electing it would be so few. But wherever the work is dignified by the name of department there should be enough hours offered, either required and elective or only elective, to equal the number prescribed for a major subject, so that if a student wishes to major in Biblical History and Literature he can do so. This can be done if necessary by offering alternating courses in successive years.

Finally, there is this consideration to be taken account of even by our larger institutions, in deciding both the name and the policy of the department. If we all of us move together in trying to build up the standards of Biblical instruction we can accomplish much more the country over than if we adopt different standards and policies. If for example, this section of the Religious Education Association together with the College Bible Teachers Association

which meets in New York during the Christmas recess, were to adopt a certain minimum standard and definite policy, it would do very much to bring the work all over the United States to the point where every institution would be proud to have such a department, rather than some neglecting the matter altogether and others being half apologetic towards it.

To sum up, then, this discussion of the minimum which should be essential to the recognition of a Biblical Department, I would suggest the following distinctive characteristics of such a department.

1. The department must be placed on a basis which is absolutely independent of all the specialized religious activities of the college.

2. It must have at least one well-trained instructor for the Biblical department alone.

3. It must be developed and rated on a plane with the history and literature departments, using the standard methods of teaching those subjects in college.

4. Its name should carry weight from its academic rather than its religious emphasis.

5. It should be a required subject for one year if possible, preferably in the sophomore year, with electives following.

6. The number of hours offered should equal the number prescribed for a major subject.

THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF COURSES IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RELIGION.

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The question, let us remind ourselves, refers to colleges. One's answer naturally depends upon his conception of the college and its function. *The college is not a professional school.* It does not exist to turn out engineers or teachers, lawyers, doctors, business men, clerks, mechanics or cooks, or even preachers, deacons, directors of religious education, Sunday school teachers or superintendents, ready to step immediately into profession, trade or occupation, and to succeed by the direct application therein of vocational principles and methods learned at college. Neither does it exist to shorten the student's subsequent period of professional training, if