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written by Prof. Maynadier on the sources used in the Idyls of the King and if anybody could make the study of literary origins fascinating, Prof. Maynadier is the man; but we confess after all that we came back from our excursion into these forbidden paths with a good deal of satisfaction to the final matchless pictures of Arthur and Merlin and the Lady of the Lake and Lancelot and Sir Galahad. If that is true of Tennyson, it is even more true of the book which it is our supreme delight to teach. Let us learn, then, from the Department of Literature, so to present these living pictures of eternal beauty that our students shall not fail to see Isaac walking disconsolate in the fields, and now the camels are coming and Rebecca is lighting down to greet the man she is to comfort for the death of his mother; and there is Ruth with downcast eyes bringing in the sheaves; and yonder is Esther stimmying her eyelids and putting on her jewels, feeling that she has come to the throne for such a time as this; and there is the shepherd boy joyously thrumming his harp, and an old man writhing on the dung heap cursing the day of his birth; and yonder is Jeremiah lying naked upon his side over against the iron skillet, wailing for the fallen walls of the holy temple; and far off in Babylon a young priest sees Jehovah in his blazing chariot, with the chief gods of Babylon chained to his chariot wheels, coming into the land of the Gentiles to reign; and at last we see yonder the three wise men coming from the East following the star.

Methods of Teaching Bible in College

RUBY NEVILLE*

Method, in teaching, is but means to an end desired, and that method is best that most directly and economically accomplishes the end. It is therefore necessary first of all to establish with some care the exact end desired. Of course, we shall always differ on details, on accent and on angle, but we should not differ widely on the general end. The end in literature is not acquisition of the world's great literary expression, not the joy that comes with companionship with "the only truth tellers left to God" as Mrs. Browning calls the poets, but it is enrichment and effectiveness of life. The end in history courses is not accumulation of details, nor even greater intelligence in following current events, but bigger people and a better citizenship. We expect the history classes to do something with the mental and moral stuff of the student. The general end with the good teacher, then, is the student and his attainment of ability and of ideals — not the transmission of mathematical formulae or philosophic doctrine.

This is high ground, and teachers taking it slip inevitably into the ranks of the prophets. It would seem but natural to find most of our Bible teachers here, but difficulties are great and I fear they have often

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been laggards, forgetting the present, vital needs of their students and therefore content merely to transmit; afraid of the "I say unto *you*," that is back of all good teaching. Surely little can be done until this right relationship between subject and student has been acknowledged. It is after all only a different setting of the same old controversy that Jesus faced when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." How then can Bible teachers, putting first things first, so treat their material that it may contribute its maximum of power and of grace to the young men and women who sign up for Bible as they sign up for other subjects in the college curriculum?

First of all, we must recognize the necessity of academic standards, the lack of which is a most serious defect in a good deal of Bible teaching. However popular its appeal, however spiritually inclined may be its management, a Bible Course that is diffuse, indefinite or poorly balanced fails of its best. Snap courses are bad anywhere, and least to be tolerated here where perhaps the danger is greatest — so eager are Bible teachers generally to display their treasures forthwith without subjecting their students to the humdrum of digging. But aside from failure through poorly arranged or poorly taught courses, academic standard is frequently defeated by false deference to the material in hand. This is a very common attitude among both students and teachers and it is disastrous for both, leading the teacher almost invariably to hedge and almost invariably also to sacrifice the student rather than frankly face the issue on the text; and leading the student into hopeless limbo and probably lack of integrity in the work that should be pre-eminently clean and free from casuistry and platitude. We are nowhere at all, academically or morally either, if we are not honest with our material. Being honest does not mean that one starts out as a literary head-hunter. The honest teacher very cheerfully calls a pebble, a pebble, when he has to, but he is so particularly joyous when he finds the pearls, and so sure that there are still more to be found, that the quest in that course becomes a sort of religious pilgrimage for the whole class before they know it; and the satisfaction of the journey is relative to the high standard of the course, and lasting in proportion as the requirements were serious.

There must be no arbitrary, previously determined limits, no pre-arranged conclusions. *Verboten* signs that baffle the inquirer are harmonious enough with the older view of the Bible as the product of plenary inspiration, inerrant and inexplicable, but there are no such signs in the field of modern Bible-study based upon an entirely different definition of the book as of natural, not mystic origin; in itself a record and deposit of life.

The chief duty of Bible teachers is to bring their pupils to see the Bible as a record and a deposit of life.

If this conception of the Bible once dawns on the student, its educative, refining influence is apparent. It is tragic for a man to think the world a failure or that God ever so considered it; to hold the universe of men and of events in two distinct classes, one sacred and one secu-

lar; to believe that salvation is or ever was a mechanical, arbitrary transaction, not the attainment of a life; to have his science and his history in high school say one thing and the approved Biblical teaching of his church say the opposite thing.

Turning to details in suggesting plans of study, the most difficult thing is perhaps the establishment of the point of view. How do we get in our wedge? Various carefully planned lessons are of service to me. The first three chapters of Genesis—a daring venture—turn out very well, so obvious is it, if the lessons are adroitly handled, that we have a composite, that the parts are of different age, different environment and present different ideas of God. The nobility of the first account of creation and the familiar unsophisticated flavor of the second, the anthem-like movement of one and the colorful, talk-quality of the other are not to be escaped. Here already are several important ideas and soon comes the question, "But didn't Moses write the Pentateuch?" Then the answer may follow, "Traditionally, yes, though his name nowhere appears in these early sections, but in view of out-and-out contradictions, of numerous repetitions, of most conflicting theology, of a peasant background in one and philosophic, city background in the other, does it seem a reasonable conclusion that he wrote much, if any, of these chapters? And in fact—the class meditation may continue—aside from faithfully representing Moses, does either conception of God, that in the first or that in the second, entirely satisfy us personally? The first is lofty, but there is no "Our Father" in it; the second is intimate but surely ignoble. That work should be considered a penalty; that man, waiving all other details, should be under condemnation for a responsiveness to beauty, for enterprise in meeting his need of food and of wisdom, qualities upon which he must build today if he builds at all—is rather disquieting; as is the definite assertion of that strange, old story that the expulsion from Paradise was lest man, this enterprising one, lay hand on the fruit of the tree of life, become as God and live forever—truly a parlous fear to an autocratic God.

Then comes the suggestion that Jesus never so pictured God, and that he ever represented him as the ongoing one, working hitherto and loving always and fatherly. And many a class will at this point take up a sort of Excelsior chant for the victory of that long and struggling line we have seen setting out however blindly for God, and drift into a real Doxology—all of which is quite possible since Freshmen are rather wonderful anyhow, quick to see and glad to adventure. The story of Jephthah's Daughter is used successfully by some as point of departure.

Perhaps my use of the figure of the entering wedge may sound negative and destructive. Many would prefer the gentler one of seed-sowing. But to me there are many arguments for a frank, yet sympathetic negative right at the first. One of Jeremiah's ringing "Thus saith the Lord's" was to say, "Break up your fallow ground; sow not among thorns," and the same good and faithful servant, writing of his call,

represented himself as called of God for a service that was two-thirds of it negative: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdom to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow; to build and to plant." There is little to fear from negative criticism if the lesson thus carefully mapped out for beginners can end on some strong, dominant note: the new and better things the centuries have taught us about God; a suggestion that they individually have the privilege of taking up the banner and carrying it farther since He is always on before; or of God among His creatures, a great venturing and achieving one. There ought on the contrary to be very definite religious experience for such ideas are positive and inspiring.

The few significant facts and ideas that students should get hold of in their first Bible work for the sake of their later building are: *First*, some few facts about the shaping and fixing of the canon. Whatever be one's conception of an ultimate providence the acceptance of books into the canon was by vote of men necessarily conditioned by their environment. One need not be very elaborate or detailed on this point. The general idea, illustrated perhaps by a little story of the council of Jamnia, will be very helpful. *Second*, the students should also see clearly that the books are composites frequently and that editors had sources usually unknown to us.

These two points are preliminary to three others more important because in themselves cultural and personally valuable: *First*, the literary and moral beauty of the Bible. A teacher should feel it a prime privilege so to study a few scriptural selections with the students as to show them the loveliness of the old scriptures, their beauty of word and phrase, their noble expression of highest thought. An introductory Bible Course should do this great thing for the students, in order that they may recognize it as a source of power and of loveliness for themselves and that they may without apology give it its rightful place in world literature. *Second*, on the cultural side, should come the conviction that the ideas of God and of His government that seem to their own moral sense meagre or ignoble were certainly superseded or will be superseded in the great sometime of God's coming Kingdom. It is infinitely more Christian to introduce no other considerations, to regard an old story as folk material of primitive origin or an old idea as merely the best afforded by its rather limited day, than to face the alternative that the father God of all the ages used Himself on occasion to condescend to brutality or to trick.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Perhaps the idea that I care most myself to get started among underclassmen is the idea of the on-going God in human history, and in converse, the great, yet slow, march of men toward the far-off divine event, the supreme brother of all men marching in the midst. I feel that some sort of introductory course where teacher and student get

acquainted and where a few significant lines of criticism are launched to make these last two points possible (the evolution of men toward God, and God in human evolution) is a very desirable thing. Others would do the same thing doubtless in some period-courses without the special introductory course. At any rate the student soon finds himself introduced to special period-courses or special subject-courses. I am inclined to stress those courses that give a general survey and those that are practical in their bearings such as: The History of the Hebrews; The Rise and Significance of Judaism; The Social Teachings of the Prophets; Outlines in the Development of Old Testament Religion; The Life and Teachings of Jesus; The History of the Church. They are better than the more circumscribed courses and they root the student more deeply in the wholesome ideas of social responsibilities. It is valuable for the post-graduate student and for the unusual, older pupil to spend a year on one of the old Testament Prophets with exegesis from the Hebrew text; but for undergraduate students generally a course in the Prophets from the English text is more educative and inspiring, showing as it would, the progress of Israel in a most dramatic period, and helping the student to see the forward movement in religion, its relationship to the orthodoxy of the time, its measure of victory that is our own religious and democratic heritage.

Just a word here on the conduct of the class. Shall the plan be text book, topical discussion based on library research, or library and lecture? The question is important, but it has to be decided for the particular class by the individual teacher. Text books are attractive in their definiteness and availability. Individual effort is certainly stimulated by research and discussion. Lectures, usually informal, give the invaluable personal "right-now-for-just-you" touch, and can be adapted day by day to the need of the class. Note books should follow up most library and discussion and lecture work. Many teachers employ all these methods, sometimes even all in the same class. The formal lecture day after day may be reasonable for some classes, sufficiently advanced to read discriminately, but young students especially need familiar persuasive talk of teachers and of fellow students. I am especially anxious to keep students familiar with the look and touch of the Bible. They must through some such sense appeal know that the new Bible is really the same old Bible only for the first time perhaps examined closely. Ideas are strangely perverse. A new conception of Isaiah gained from some text-book may stubbornly attach itself to that text-book and be practically non-existent for the poor student who later reads Isaiah from his Bible. Browning said of the old yellow book, "Give me the book, the things restorative i' the touch."

I will close this paper with a few do's and a few do-not's that my rather long experience has taught me.

1. Arrange all courses and treat all material in the courses with an eye to the students' widening interest. Anticipate their social and intellectual problems.

2. Never forget a proper academic standard and pedagogic method, preferably the pedagogic method of the school of experience.

3. Link up Bible work with life experiences. It is a great loss if the pupil never sees the bearing of his Bible work on campus activities; or its parallel in world movements. It is a calamity if there is no linking with other departments. Evolution ought to be the same thing essentially in the Bible-room as it is in the biological laboratory, though observed in different fields.

4. Frankly acknowledge all limitations in one's own study and in the work of the critics.

5. Do not dogmatize.

6. First of all establish personal terms with the student. There may be points one does not want to discuss with some classes but all is lost if the student does not feel that the teacher is ready to talk with perfect freedom and absolute honesty just as long as he wants to talk.

7. Do not display all your treasures or all your criticisms at once. Students easily feel overwhelmed.

8. If certain worn-out planks give trouble throw them overboard, but it is not necessary to be too conspicuous about it. If the trumpets are to be blown let it be at the putting in of new ones.

9. Stimulate student discussion, for older students especially.

10. None of these seem to me more important than leading the student to a very frank scenting of the text, and to the formation of some personal judgment upon what he reads. This spirit of inquiry, of challenge, and of doubt is absolutely essential. There is little hope for any student in any line who does not scrutinize his material.

I am aware of the delicacy with which such a program of securing attention to the records must be handled. I realize the disaster of mere negativeness, the sadness of the quickened mind that finds no anchorage. Does not the whole problem go back to the character and skill of the teacher? Great teachers are not so common anyway, and just about all the stability we now have is in our teachers, but there are a few who are ready and able to do right by their teaching. Personally I would have no Bible teaching at all until the right personality can be found. Our ministers are not able even if they had time. Their experience has been in pulpit and in pastoral lines. The ordinary layman, however sympathetic, cannot do the work for it demands long and laborious preparation. It pre-supposes knowledge of other languages, other histories and religions, especially a sympathetic appreciation of the needs of the present. Our church colleges and theological schools must supply the teachers, but even they will do it with difficulty. They can impart information, suggest methods and courses, equip their libraries, but they cannot so easily call the right teacher to the work. It is entirely possible to find the log and put it in some strategic place where the highroads cross, and needy hearts drift by in multitudes, but it is not so easy to find a Mark Hopkins.