

# Sunday Reading.

## STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

Reasons for the Attention that Should be Given to it or Education.

There seems to have been of late something almost like a concerted effort to draw attention to the literary aspects of the bible. Of books recently published on the subject we may mention "The Literary Study of the Bible," by Prof. R. G. Moulton, and the selection of passages from the bible, with special reference to their literary beauty and interest, made by Mr. Fraser, one of the fellows of Trinity college, Cambridge. It is significant also that, in the series of "English Lyrics" now publishing, no less than two volumes are devoted to "Lyrics from the bible." No one can say that too much space is thus given to the book, which, if nothing else, is a great glory of English literature, and in which the "lyrical cry" is so sustained and haunting.

Nor can any one say that the bible, both as literature and in literature, does not need far more attention than it is receiving in current educational methods, whether of the family, the Sunday school or the college. That is to say, it surely needs it if its beauties and grandeur are to remain a part of one common literary tradition, and if the aroma of it and allusions to it which pervade our literature are not to become meaningless to readers. A striking, almost appalling, article on "Ignorance respecting the bible," by a college president, was published in the Independent last November. In it he gave the results of a test he had made of the Biblical knowledge of a freshman class of thirty-four men. They came from the best homes of New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania; yet, when confronted with twenty-two allusions to the bible in Tennyson's poems, betrayed astounding ignorance.

Less than one-half the allusions, nearly all of which were perfectly obvious, were correctly explained in their answers. The first, "For I have flung thee pearls and found thee swine," was commented upon by one sagacious youth, "The Devil was adjured into swine." Another explained the phrase, "marked me even as Cain," by informing the examiner that Cain was a farmer and had to work hard, hence his "mark." These are but specimens of the grotesque misunderstanding of Biblical phraseology and story displayed by what must be considered an exceptionally intelligent body of young men. How long will it be before learned scholastics will have to interpret to our generation the Biblical allusions with which our literature is saturated, and which, to the minds of fifty years ago, saturated with the Bible, appealed with swift illumination and suggestiveness?

One difficulty, it must be confessed, lies in general conditions as much as in anything peculiar to the Bible. That book we do not carry in our minds any more as a familiar friend, but neither do we carry any more; we have indexes. If the comparison were made between an intimate knowledge of the Bible and an intimate knowledge of the classics, the latter would be found to have lamentably decayed as much as the other. The wonderful Renaissance memory, wax to receive and marble to retain, could safely challenge the doubter to put a dagger to the owner's heart and strike home if a verbal slip could be detected in any given passage of Tacitus or Horace.

There are no such giants in these days of Jaribuch and Zeitschrift. The Bible is thus suffering in good company. If you have a good concordance, what more do you need in an age that does not care to know a thing, but only to know where you can find it?

But there are, of course, special reasons why the Bible has ceased to be the essential part of mental furniture that it once was to all English-speaking men and women. One of them, and a most powerful one, is the almost complete turning over of Biblical instructions to the Sunday-school, and the almost complete disappearance, even in christian families, from the old place in daily reading and regular memorizing. We know, of course, that the scheme of Sunday-school lessons contemplates covering the whole Bible—or those parts of it fit to be taught children—in seven years. We are well aware of the scheme for daily readings meant to go with the Sunday recitations. But we know also that, as a rule, these projected readings and this comprehensive plan of study are not carried out at all, with the result of giving children a most chaotic and fragmentary idea of the Bible. We say nothing here of the failure to teach the body of well ascertained truths about the Bible, its history and manner of composition. That is a scandalous thing, morally, but it has little to do with the literary appreciation of the Bible. What we do say, however, is that broken, haphazard, come-and-go methods of Bible teaching in Sunday-schools are as successful as if they were designed with deadly ingenuity for that very purpose, in destroying all rational appreciation of the Bible as literature, and in making it a happy-go-lucky collection of "golden texts" and strange and disconnected promises and threatenings, and moralities, without form and void.

Probably nine-tenths of the college students referred to above had gone through at least two seven-year cycles in Sunday school lessons. What profit did they get, except to give their ignorance the special charm of confusion and grotesqueness? Jacob served seven years for a wife, and at least got a wife, if not the one he wanted; but most of our seven-year Sunday-school scholars emerge from the period with little or nothing to show for their time.

The question arises, how much better will the purely literary method of Bible study succeed—succeed, we mean, in stirring to the mind with the felicities and pic-

temporal dominance of the Church. Christ interprets the Restoration by the spiritual power lodged in Luther and Calvin and Wycliff and Knox; and the Roman hierarchy fell in spite of the heroic loyalty of Ignatius Loyola and "the trifling heads and the corrupted hearts" of those who then sat in the Papal chair, so that the remark of De Lamennais has in it a sublime Christian judgement: "O! what avail are the wily hands stretched forth to arrest the progress of the human race?"

Meanwhile let us try our lips at ascribing daily praise to our dear Redeemer, not as a mere prophet and martyr, but as a slain and risen Lord, whose life brought life to life, whose death put death to death, whose crimson blood washes crimson stains away! What a sublime and encouraging thought for us who make much of the statement both in our theology and our heartfelt love, that the saints of heaven can find no higher thing to praise and no sweeter thing to sing than the sacrificial death of Him who on the cross made propitiation for our sins!

### THE SILVER SHOE.

Chinese Parable about a Lad Who Used to Be Fond of Makies Music.

The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor tells a Chinese parable about a lad who was employed as a house servant and went about singing all the time, and somewhat boisterously. His mistress, whose nerves were none too well balanced, complained to her husband that Ah Sing had quite too much 'sing' in his composition; that he sang night and day, upstairs and down, outdoors and in, and that her request to him to stop his noise had no effect even in moderating his melodies.

Her husband replied that, if she desired it, he thought he could put an end to Ah Sing's music without adopting any severely repressive measures. So he went into the barn and hid, down in the bottom of the bran box, a silver 'shoe' weighing about fifty ounces. He then had the boy shovel out the bran and remove it to another place. Ah Sing began his work, and, as he came to the bottom of the bin, brought up on his shovel something unusually heavy. The bran being brushed away the shining shoe was revealed. Ah Sing, who, like most Chinese youths, knew little of the distinction between 'mine' and 'thine' looked on the silver treasure with no little amazement. He was suddenly made rich. Visions of great wealth and luxury were suggested to his imagination by that shining shoe. Somebody had left it in the bran—he said to himself—and forgotten it, and when the bran was brought and brought to the barn all trace was lost of the owner.

Without hesitation, Ah Sing appropriated the suddenly-acquired fortune, and the next question was what to do with it. If he buried it, someone might notice the earth newly turned up, and suspect hidden treasure. If he hid it in the haystack, it might be observed that the haystack had been disturbed, or the cattle might eat into it and disturb the precious ingot. He tried one way after another to husband his silver wealth and guard it from other eyes. He hid it in various successive hiding places but could not be content to let it remain. He would come down at midnight to change its place of concealment. But from the hour when he found that silver shoe he lost his song! He went about no longer singing or light-hearted; he looked troubled, and appeared as one who bore a burden of anxiety. The fact was, he had a secret, a guilty secret, and so he had no more singing in his heart. That ingot, though it weighed but fifty ounces, was too heavy for Ah Sing to carry.

He not only lost his song, but his rest, his sleep, his appetite, his health; he began to get pale and thin, and his mistress became anxious for him. She said to her husband one day, "My dear, what have you done to that boy? He not only does not sing any more, but he has lost his health, and, I fear, is going into a decline." "Wife," answered her husband, "if you desire, I think I can bring back his song." So he said to Ah Sing, "What did you do with that silver shoe that I left in the bran box? When you found it, you knew it was not yours. Why did you not bring it to me, and tell me about it. Now run along Ah Sing, and bring it to me, for I know all about it." So the boy, knowing that his secret was a secret no longer, went and brought out the precious ingot from its hiding place, and delivered it to its proper owner. Scarcely twenty-four hours had gone by before Ah Sing was himself again, and went about singing and happy. He had got rid of the burden on his conscience, and now he was happy again.

Vain is it for us to hope to carry a true song if we are bearing a burden of conscious guilt. —Christian Herald.

### SECTARIAN SPIRIT.

Men everywhere, especially the un-churched, whom, most of all, it is our mission and duty to reach, are in a state of revolt against denominationalism. It is the religious quarrels over definitions and names and sectarian rivalries which have alienated them from the old churches. You will never get them to understand that the real difference is merely nominal; and if you do it will not help the matter. It will seem to them that we liberals, while professing freedom from dogmatism, still remain the dogmatic spirit and at bottom really care more for those things that distinguish us from each other than we do for those deeper and more vital things in which we are all united and which unite us to all men; and, of course, so long as they think this they naturally, and rightfully, too, will mistrust us, and the salvation which society might have at our united hands it will lose. —J. Duncan.

### CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

Christian charity meets a drunken woman in the streets, as did a fair young girl the other day, takes the poor slatternly wretch gently round the waist, walks down the crowded thoroughfare, and puts the half unconscious woman to bed, warms some soup, leaves her to sleep, and then from day to day visits the home until for very love's sake the better life is found and the devil of drink cast out by the new affection.

In short, Christian charity sees in the individual that which God needs in his perfect world and trains it for that high end. There is more Christian charity in teaching a trade than in alms, in finding work than in relieving want. —F. G. Peabody.

### RELIGION FOR YOUNG MEN.

Shall I speak of the beauty of holiness in youth? I fancy that young men are, most of all, inclined to feel shy of the whole thing; to some it savours of grave restrictions, to others of a sort of cant. All very proper for a divinity student, but for a young man looking forward to the common work and pleasure of the world, and rejoicing in vigorous youth—youth with its keen sense of life; youth brave and skilful in manly sport; youth just entering on the strong work and strong temptations of the world—it is just in such a life that earn est unaffected religiousness brings the very finest grace of real manhood. It would not make him weak, but gentle and helpful with its strength; it would not lessen pleasure, but keep it sweet and wholesome; the very merriest laugh that comes ringing to me through the halls of memory is that of one of my early friends who always seemed to me the most like Christ of all I ever knew. Religion—earnest, unashamed religion—does not make a young man less brave, but more; adding to mere nerve and pluck that finer courage which can stand up squarely against wrong; say "No!" to profanity and dissipation, and say it so as to be respected. And so, to the whole opening life religion gives a richer zest, a finer appreciation of all things great and good, and that interest in higher things which keeps bringing to the front the strong and helpful men of each new generation. —Rev. Brooke Herford.

### DRAWN FROM LIFE.

Nothing is more noticeable in the teaching of Jesus Christ than the simplicity and directness of his illustrations drawn from the common life of the commonest sort of common people, and his searching application of eternal truths to the evils, needs and duties of the age and country in which He lived. No preacher who has any proper sense of the force of the Master's example can fail to attempt to apply the ever old truth to the ever-new want of the world; and that pulpit which in any fair degree succeeds in this endeavor will be perpetually "new."

### BLINDNESS IS NOT PHILOSOPHY.

The death of Professor Huxley recalls the fact that the late Professor Robertson Smith, while cordially recognizing Huxley's merits as a zoologist, was accustomed to speak with extreme scorn of philosophy. He said that Huxley and Tyndall could never have gained such influence as they had except in "an age indulgent beyond most others to ignorance which calls itself philosophy, and blindness which calls itself scientific doubt." Such a comment may sound severe, but it is surely the severity of justice.

### A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as we see the day approaching." —Heb 10: 23-25.

### WHERE LABOURERS ARE LEW.

There is one Christian minister for every 900 of the population in Great Britain, and there is but one in every 114,000 in Japan, one in 165,080 in India, one in 222,000 in Africa, one in 437,000 in China.

## Severe Weather Changes In August.

### The Infants Claim Protection.

### Lactated Food Keeps Them Strong and Healthy.

How varied the weather this month! We hear even robust men and women complaining loudly about the sudden changes. How about the poor, weak and helpless babies? Do we make proper efforts to secure health, rest and comfort for the little ones?

This work of helping and saving the babies is best done when we diet the precious ones in a sensible way. The babies depend upon proper food for good health. Every sensible mother and experienced physician will tell you that Lactated Food secures a perfect condition of health for the babies, especially in August weather.

The plump, healthy little ones with firm flesh, hard muscles, rosy complexions, merry ways, are the babies who have been fed on Lactated Food.

Mothers, you cannot afford to trifle this month with infantile life. Use Lactated Food, and the dear ones will soon show strength and vigor. Dysentery, diarrhoea and cholera infantum have no terrors when the best of all foods is used from day to day.

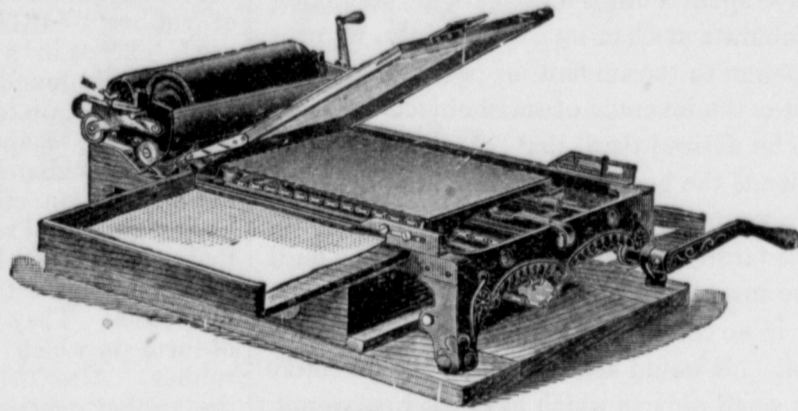
If you have not given Lactated Food a trial, send to Wells & Richardson Co., Montreal, and they will mail you (free of charge) a sample tin.

### THE COLONEL AND THE MELON THIEF.

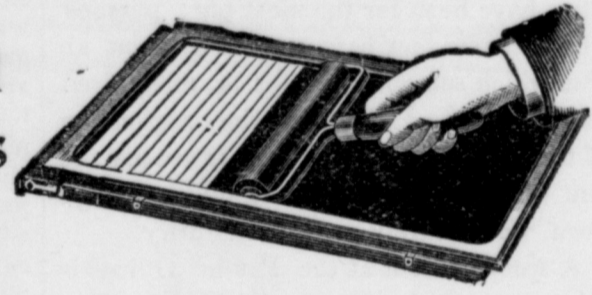
A prominent colonel at Swainsboro has a water melon patch which has been raided by enterprising darkies on several occasions. The Colonel missed so many melons that one night recently he seized a double barreled shotgun and repaired to his melon patch to await the coming of the thief. He soon saw what appeared to be the figure of a man, when he immediately opened fire.

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he reached the door he was travelling at such a rapid rate he could not stop to unbar it, so he decided it wasn't much in the way anyhow, and as he dashed against it the door flew all the way across the room, striking the wall and shattering twelve window panes.

Investigation next morning on the scene of action developed the following facts: The melon patch is virtually ruined, it being torn to pieces by the Colonel and the thief, each doing his best to see who could get out first. The first leap the Colonel made he jumped clear from under his hat, which was found next morning. He ran over melons, bursting them right and left, tearing the vines off the land. On the other side, where the thief went out, was found blood on the vines, trees, and fence, and where he went out of the melon patch there were twelve panels of plank fence knocked down.—Atlanta Constitution.

### What the Queen Could Do.

As a matter of fact, our Sovereigns have rarely taken any active part in politics since George III's time, but they could still do some very astonishing things if they chose. The Queen could dismiss away Tommy Atkins in our Army, from the Commander-in-Chief to the youngest drummer-boy. She could disband the Navy in the same way, and sell all our ships, stores, and arsenals to the first customer that came along. Acting entirely on her own responsibility, she could declare war against any foreign country, or make a present to any foreign Power of any part of the Empire. She could make every man, woman, and child in the country a peer of the realm, with the right, in the case of males who are of age, to a seat in the House of Lords. With a single word she could dismiss any Government that happened to be in power; and could, it is believed, pardon and liberate all the criminals in our gaols. There are a few of the things the Queen could do that she liked; but it is not necessary to say that Her Majesty never acts in matters of State except on the advice of the Government for the time being.—English Paper.

### The Canary and the Dog.

J. P. Hounam, a stationer of Middlesborough, England, opened the cage in which he keeps his canary recently to give the bird a little exercise. The bird flew to the backyard of Tate's eating house, where a large Newfoundland dog is kept. The dog opened its jaws wide and the canary flew straight into them, and its fate was apparently sealed, for the jaws closed and doggie licked his chops with relish. Immediately afterward, however, the dog was taken ill, and the canary was rescued and restored. It was soon warbling briskly again, but since its experience it refuses to leave its cage.

### The Talent of Success.

Believe me, the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do, without a thought of fame. If it comes at all, it will come because it is deserved, not because it is sought after; and, moreover, there will be no misgivings—no disappointment—no hasty, feverish, exhausting excitement.—Longfellow.

### It Happened that way.

Jones—"A very unpleasant thing happened to me a few nights ago." Smith—"Tell me all about it." Jones—"It was at a social gathering. One feature of the entertainment was a

vocal solo by Miss Fowler. You know she has a dreadful voice, and I actually suffer when I have to listen to her, although personally we are quite friendly. I went into the next room and put my fingers in my ears. After a while somebody touched me on the shoulder. It was Miss Fowler herself. She said: "Why don't you take your fingers out of your ears. I quit singing ten minutes ago."

### What Ho sees Won't Do.

A old cavalryman says that a horse will never step on a man intentionally. It is a standing order with cavalry that, should a man become dismounted, he must lie down and keep perfectly still. If he does so, the entire troop will pass over him without his being injured. A horse notices where he is going, and is on the look-out for a firm foundation to put his foot on. It is an instinct with him therefore, to step over a prostrate man. The injuries caused to human beings by a runaway horse are nearly always inflicted by the animal knocking down and not by his stepping on them.

### Birds that Dance.

According to Nature Notes, there can no longer be any doubt that birds are addicted to the dance. The bower-birds and the prairie owl are adepts in the art, while the American grouse is a veritable master of ceremonies. It is the custom of these birds to prepare their ball-room by beating down the grass with their wings, and then to dance something suspiciously like the Lancers. By twos and fours they advance, bowing their heads and dropping their wings; then they recede and then advance again, and turn on their toes, swelling their feathers and clucking gently.

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