

BACK TO THE BIBLE

By Flora Swetnam

David truly said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." And John said, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The way to comprehend that light is to make use of it. Every Sunday school lesson has light which may be stored up for future use if the impression is deeply made at the right time. The old-time custom of studying the lesson at home was most excellent, and often produced lasting results. I have in mind a family whose custom it was to gather the children together on Saturday evening to study the Sunday school lesson. They usually had plenty of helps, and the lesson was really studied, not lightly skimmed over. Four children were in that family, and there went out from it four ministers. The choice of vocation made by those young people was, in part at least, due to those wholesome study periods. One of those young men was heard to say that he did not fully understand all the Scripture verses which he learned in childhood, but later the meaning came to him most forcefully.

When young people face a class teacher to take part in the discussion of a lesson at which they have not even glanced, it makes a rather trying situation for teacher and pupils—unless the teacher has the habit of standing up and lecturing the pupils, who in their turn have their minds miles away from the scene. And those who wait till they get to class to learn the lesson fail to get it, for the class period is all too short. The consequence is that the pupils return home about as ignorant as when they left. I don't know who started the heresy that when there is a teacher it relieves the parents of responsibility, but many parents have been tainted by it. They do not at all feel that the lessons recited in the public school begin and end with the teacher.

The Bible is an inexhaustible treasure house. The more it is studied, the more profitable it may become. A seminary professor told his class of young ministers that when he was quite a young preacher he often went home from his church service feeling that he had exhausted his supply of texts, and wondering what in the world he would do. He ended by saying that before another Sunday he had found one, and that he had now discovered he would never be able to use them all.

Not long since a bit of Sunday school literature fell into my hands, and as it is my custom to examine new things, I read it—in part. The writer was trying to rid Sunday school folks of the idea that reading the Bible would make one good. I have no doubt his intentions were good, but a test of the matter would prove him in error. If the Bible is read with honest purpose, it never fails in its effect. Another mistaken person, in discussing the subject with me, put forth the theory that children could be "Scripture-hardened" and would thus grow to lose respect for sacred things. I replied, "No, indeed, they cannot. It is the lack of Scripture that hardens."

The reading of the Word gives power; power in prayer, in expression of thought, in self-control and in right ideals. One of the ablest preachers I know accepts his Bible without question.

If we look backward over the early days of our country, when we were just struggling to become a great nation, we find that the men who were shining lights of wisdom and sound statesmanship were readers of the Bible. If we look about us today, we find numbers of men crippled and stunted for want of it. I taught for a number of years in the public schools, and I

found that my pupils delighted in the Bible stories I told them, and were improved by them. Not so many young people would go down in defeat when they face college life, if they had had soundness bred into them by a proper use of the Bible.

There seems to be a "back to the Bible" movement these days, and we hear more about plans for having it taught in the public schools. If it is not taught there, the teachers should at least see that there is a morning worship period. We had one when I taught, and sometimes we substituted a Bible drill which was quite popular. A minister who visited our school at that time and questioned the pupils somewhat about the Bible, complimented them by saying, "You children know more about the Bible than any children I've found. I don't know how you learned it, but you surely know it." It was worth all the effort put forth just to see how joyously they accepted that word of praise.

Character can be much more strongly built if it has a framework of scriptural truth upon which to rest. Darkness cannot glower where an open Bible sheds its beams, for truly, "The entrance of thy words giveth light."—*Herald of Holiness*.

SEPARATED LIFE

Mrs. H. C. Morrison.

Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians, 6th chapter and 17th verse, exhorts the Christians to a separated life, by saying: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

In the preceding verses the apostle shows to the early Christians that light and darkness, Christ and Belial, have no fellowship with each other; neither can the follower of Jesus associate with, and participate in, the pastimes and amusements of the ungodly, and keep in touch with the God of infinite holiness.

The Saviour taught us that it was impossible to serve two masters; impossible to have the same affection for two different objects; we would either hate the one and love the other, or love the one and hate the other, thus proving conclusively that God and mammon could not occupy a place in our hearts at the same time. There is a law in physics that two objects cannot occupy the same place at the same time, which is equally true in the spiritual realm.

To be separate from the world, we must bid farewell to its foibles, pleasures and amusements, concentrating our affections and desires on the things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. James tells us that a "double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways." It takes concentration on any thing, secular or religious, to make a success of it, but how much more do things eternal require our undivided affection, when we have the world, the flesh, and the devil to contend with. All who have gone before us who have made good in the Christian race, did so by practicing the motto of St. Paul, when he declared "This one thing I do." Some one has said that "We are not here to play, or dream, or drift; we dare not shun the struggle, but face it as God's gift."

Then, there is power in the separated life. Jesus taught this in his life when here on earth by often drawing aside and closing himself in with the Father. What strength came to him through those all-night times of communion with the Father! How he would go out to meet the surging multitudes undergirded with supernatural strength, and how his words would fall with

dynamic power upon the hearts of the eager throngs as they pressed upon him.

There is a translation of the first verse of the 91st Psalm which is very beautiful and gives a practical lesson of separation. It reads: "He that goeth aside to sit quietly in the secret place of the Most High will find Him coming over so close that this man shall be lodged under the very shadow of the Almighty." This is but another way of saying, "Draw nigh to the Lord, and he will draw nigh to you." The Lord always meets us more than half way, when he sees we are making our way toward him.

The separated life is the easy way to live the Christian life. Let it be understood in three worlds that you are determined not to "know anything but Jesus Christ and him crucified," and the temptations that come to a half-way Christian would gradually leave you. Of course, you will always have the tempter to contend with, but you have every advantage when your heart and mind are set for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And, always after the battle of temptation will come the ministering angels.

There is a beautiful thought in the following lines, with which I shall close this meditation.

"Come ye apart from all the world holds dear,

For converse which the world has never known,

Alone with Me, and with My Father here,

With Me and with My Father not alone,

Come, tell Me all that ye have said and done,

Your victories and failures, hopes and fears,

I know how hardly souls are wooed and won:

My choicest wreaths are always wet with tears.

Then fresh from converse with your Lord return,

And work till daylight softens into eve:

The brief hours are not lost in which ye learn
More of your Master and His rest in heaven."

—Pentecostal Herald.

THE PRAYER LIFE

PRAYER'S "FIVE REASONS"

The following is George Muller's statement telling why he believed his prayers for the unsaved must be answered:

"First, I have had no shadow of doubt in praying for their salvation, knowing as I do that it is the Lord's will they should be saved, for He would 'have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (I. Tim. 2:4), 'And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us' (I. John 5:14).

"The second reason is, I have never pleaded for their salvation in my own name, but in the all-worthy name of my precious Lord Jesus (John 14:14), that is, on the ground of His merit and worthiness, and on that alone.

"The third reason is, I have always believed in the ability and willingness of God to answer my prayers (Mark 11:24).

"The fourth reason is, that I have not allowed myself in known sin, for 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' (Psalm 66:18).

"The fifth reason is, that I have continued in believing prayer for over fifty-two years, and shall so continue until the answer is given. Luke 18:7: "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?"

Whenever the Lord showed George Muller that it was His will he should pray he continued in prayer until the answer came.