

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

THE BIBLE AS A CIVILIZING AGENCY
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The paramount and final goal of the Word of God, is not to civilize, but to convert and spiritualize. Its first aim is not for social betterment, but for spiritual adjustment. Not to improve men socially, but to perfect men spiritually. Not merely to adjust man to man, but to first adjust man to God. Failure to perceive this great and supreme truth has plunged the churches into a feverish program of social betterment schemes, attempting to make a by-product of the gospel the chief end.

It is easy to slip into this error, for charity talk is so much more comforting to the human heart than self denial, and death to sin. In works of benevolence the flesh may have whereof to glory, but God's plan is that "no flesh shall glory in his presence." Men are prone to teach salvation by works and human deeds make a strong appeal, and many think that Heaven will be a reward for a few acts of charity. But the scripture is so plain in its teaching that salvation is by grace alone, that honest readers will not err in this matter.

Nevertheless, for all the truth of the above, it cannot be denied that the Bible is a civilizing agency. It is very true that social betterment is a by-product of the Gospel. Nothing is more true than words attributed to General Booth, when a young evangelist. He said something like this: "I have no money to help the poor, but I can give them the gospel, and when they get saved, they will help themselves." There is more power in a spiritual gospel to finally help man temporally, than in a merely social betterment program. Every church has done more to help the poor by clinging closely to a spiritual program than when side-tracked to a social program. It is absolutely true that when people get really saved, they at once want to improve their way of living. The money that formerly went for drink and tobacco and other follies, will now go for better food and clothing and home improvements.

The Bible is the only hope when it comes to man's relation to his fellow man, whether it be the individual or the nation. A Chinese writer recently said, "The acid test of successful human living is knowing how to live in peace and good will with our fellow men." He quotes Henry Ward Beecher as saying, "There is no other thing that is so taxing, requiring so much education, so much wisdom, so much patience, so much practice, as how to live with our fellow men. In importance, this art exceeds all productive industries which we teach our children." This is true, and where shall we find directions for doing this, but in the Word of God? If all men followed the Bible, wars would forever cease.

Again, the Bible affords us the most adequate protection when it comes to our property or to safety of body and limb. In South America a man stole a Bible from a Colporteur of the Bible Society, not knowing what the book was. He read it, got converted and restored the Bible. Once upon a time a ship sailing the Southern seas fell short of food and water. In desperate need they sent out a scouting party to a supposedly cannibal island. The men set out with great fear, and were to creep through the forest with great caution, and with instructions to signal the

ship if they got in trouble. Soon after they had gone ashore they were seen on a hilltop in plain sight waving for the men of the ship to come ashore. The men on the ship were astonished and could not imagine what had happened. What was it? The scouting party had crawled to the hilltop overlooking a valley, and there they had spied the spire of a church. The Bible had been here! No need of any further caution! Infidels may prate, but they know this is true. An old sea captain was talking to a native of a Pacific island. He made disparaging remarks about the missionaries and their work. The native at once told the captain that had it not been for the missionaries and the gospel, he and his people would be picking his bones by that time. Since the present war, native Christians have led unconverted soldiers to Christ, and one head man made an earnest appeal to an army officer to forbid his men to swear, saying they were not used to it, and did not like it. The officer issued the order.

Two men travelling in a remote part of the country, having lost their way, stumbled upon a humble cabin where lived an old man and his son. The travellers were invited to stay for the night. Upon retiring, since they feared they might be robbed or murdered in the night, they got out their pistols, and agreed that one should watch while the other slept. Accordingly one man went to bed and was about to fall asleep when his friend also began to make ready to retire. In surprise he asked why he was not going to watch. His friend replied there was no need of it, and told why. Through a crack in the partition he had seen the old man take down a well worn Bible, and heard and saw him read it. Why not go to bed and sleep?

And so it proves under every test, mankind are at their best in every respect, where the good Book is most fondly cherished, and its precept most closely followed. Amen!

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SYMBOLS OF GOD'S CARE OF HIS PEOPLE

As a mother comforteth (Isa. 66:13).
As a father pitieth (Psa. 103:13).
As a nurse cherisheth (1 Thess. 2:7).
As a shepherd seeketh (Ezek. 34:12).
As a hen gathereth (Matt. 23:37).
As an eagle fluttereth (Deut. 32:11).
As a bridegroom rejoiceth (Isa. 62:5).

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The most up-to-date book in the world is the Bible. It sheds more light upon the significance of present-day movements among peoples and nations than can any other book, or any magazine or newspaper obtainable. The trends of the day, the motives behind individual and national acts, all have been prewritten in the Word of God. This fact constitutes one of the many evidences of the divine authority of the Bible.—Louis T. Talbot.

SOWING THE SEED

Not all hotel managers like to have Bibles in their rooms. For example: when a hotel in western Canada changed ownership, the new proprietor had all the Gideon Bibles thrown out on the dump. Later, a poor girl went to the dump, hoping to find something of small value that she might sell. Noticing the Bibles, she picked one up and took it home, and through reading it, she found Christ, and

TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES

There are numerous translations of the Scriptures presented to the English-reading public. The difficulty to adequately translate into our English language the varying shades of meaning of the words and phrases of the languages in which the Word of God was written originally has inspired groups and individuals to endeavor to interpret these varied meanings by presenting the different translations of scripture, especially of the New Testament. These translations have value and make a contribution toward a better understanding of the message of the Bible as given in its original languages; however, the standard versions, that is, the King James and Revised versions, are by far the most authentic and acceptable translations. The several "private translations" are to be accepted and studied much like we accept and study a commentary on the Bible, that is, as personal interpretations or translations of men whose minds are colored to some extent by their theological training and prejudices.

There is a sense, however, in which each Christian is his own translation of the Scriptures. Is that a strange suggestion? Do you remember what Paul told the Corinthian Christians? He said, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." He seems to suggest that these Christians were his epistles—his gospel message in life. In other words, they were translating his message in terms of everyday living.

Yes, we are translating the Scriptures into terms of everyday living if we are faithful children of God. As we read and study the Scriptures, as we meditate on its message, we are to translate what is found there into terms of practical living. Its commandments and admonitions are to be translated into practical living by our obedience to them. Its revelations of God's will for us and of the privileges which are ours in the Christian life may be translated into great spiritual blessings in our own lives and through us to the lives of others as we walk in the light of these truths. As we receive its rich devotional messages and assimilate them in our hearts, they are translated into the mellowness and enrichment of Christian character. As we receive and follow the knowledge the Bible brings to us of things of the spiritual life we, by the help of God, may translate these into more abundant spiritual living, more Christlikeness in disposition and a richer bearing of the fruit of the Spirit. As we come to understand more of the will of God revealed in His Word, we are able to translate this will in terms of our Christian service.

Yes, startling though the fact may be, we are translations of the Scriptures. As we are faithful in our study of His Word, and as we obediently walk in the Spirit, we are able to translate the Word of God in terms of practical living in such a way as to bring glory and honor to God the author.—Herald of Holiness.

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this led to the founding of a Sunday school class whose members also went to the dump and provided themselves with Bibles, so that not a single copy was left unappropriated.—S. S. Times.