

situations, have whole families of solutions and the solution which fits our case can be singled out only by knowing the so-called initial conditions of the problem. That is to say, after the mathematician has done his best, he must turn the problem back to the laboratory. The needle is still in the haystack, but at any rate we know which haystack to search.

And then there is the personal limitation upon mathematics in its application to science. It must take its material from fallible sources. The scientist, all too frequently, is not master of the mathematical machine in any such sense as he is of his reagents or his coils or his lenses. Then too there is the visitation upon the children of the sins of the fathers who have tried to teach science without mathematics. There is a high powered car at the laboratory door but the scientist has not learned to drive and he cannot always pick up a competent mathematician who has time to chauffeur for him.

Finally, there is the limitation inherent in the nature of mathematics itself. So many people think mathematics can do anything. But in a very real sense mathematics is non-creative. Mathematics is essentially concerned with transformations; its conclusions are inherent in its assumptions. However marvelous seems the mathematical machine to those who stand in ignorant awe of it, it is really no churn which can produce butter if you have put in no cream. Or, to change the figure, if you expect to get a rabbit from the magician's hat, you must first put the rabbit in the hat.

THOMAS McNIDER SIMPSON, JR.

A truly enlightened mind is all the simpler for being enlightened and thinks, not without a modest sort of irony, that art and life exist to be enjoyed and not to be estimated. Why should different estimations annoy anyone who is not a snob, when, if they are sincere, they express different enjoyments?—GEORGE SANTAYANA.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Ye search the scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me."—JOHN V, 39.

THE words as read may seem a little strange to you, because in the more familiar King James version they read, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

I have given the revised reading because I believe it to be a better translation, and because it better conveys the spirit of the Master as He spoke the words. He would approve, I have no doubt, the *imperative* "search ye"—the charge to read the scriptures—He *certainly* did so by His own example; but this did not happen to be the thing that was uppermost in His mind at the time.

He had done a notable healing which happened to be on the Sabbath day, and the leaders of the Jews were immediately up in arms against Him. They hated Him, anyhow, were deeply jealous of Him, and they used this literal breach of the Sabbath commandment as a pretext to persecute Him and to try to compass His death.

He answered with a reference to God as His *Father*; and then they were all the more embittered against Him, because they said He had made Himself equal with God, thereby becoming a blasphemer. He then entered upon a long defense of the *relationship* and of His work justified by it, in which He turned against His accusers as evidence for Himself one of the objects of their highest veneration—"Ye search the scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are the very writings which bear witness of me."

"Bible Sunday" in our own Church, and now "Universal Bible Sunday" by common consent of the other Churches.

A sermon delivered at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Harrisonburg, on December 6, 1931.

There is much light in the assertion for us as we turn our thoughts to the scriptures on this second Sunday in Advent, long

"Ye search the scriptures." "Search"—it is a strong word, meaning to look into scrutinizingly, to examine carefully—and it was strikingly true of the men to whom Jesus addressed the remark, religious interpreters of or rather expounders of the Jewish law, contained in their scriptures. We must remember that there were no Christian scriptures then. With the utmost minuteness they examined and compared the texts, and in their different schools disputed and argued over precise points of interpretation, believing that in these religious writings handed down to them by the fathers was indeed to be found a literal and explicit guide to Heaven.

But if it were there, they had not found it—so Jesus clearly implied: "Ye search because ye think; but"—what? "These are they which testify of me, bear witness to me; and me ye refuse, me ye deny, me ye seek to kill. Your searching has been beside the mark. You have missed the heart of the scriptures."

It was a Jewish fault, we think, and not of particular concern to us now; but it is a universal human failing, born of our proneness to be cock-sure that we are right; and therefore, that they who differ from us are necessarily wrong; a fault that in religion manifests itself particularly in Bibliolatry, the worship of a book, the belief that God has once and for all, literally and infallibly revealed Himself in our scriptures and as we read them.

Christianity has been full of it. It is the explanation of all our sectarianism.

"They who profess to represent the Church are not rightly interpreting the Book, the 'Word of God,' which tells the way of eternal life; therefore, we will organize a body of men who will render to God that service; and those others—well, we will hate them, and refute them, and if

we get the power, burn them at the stake . . . at the least we shall read them out of the Church, out of the Kingdom of God." And these in their turn are so read out; and we have division and cordial dislike and mutual faultfinding, each party thinking that it does God's service; that it is the right custodian of God's written revelation of Himself.

It is the explanation of our "fundamentalist" brethren, so-called, of recent days; hotly declaiming the inerrant accuracy and infallibility of the Bible, according to their own particular reading of it, though differing among themselves; and heaping abuse, some of them, and bitter charges—against any who might dare to find a different reading.

All these, sectarian and partisan alike, searching the scriptures because in them they think they find eternal life; but missing Him of whom the Bible bears witness—and how much more in the New Testament than the Old—beholding Him yet not finding Him, because they know not what manner of spirit He is of; not seeing in Him the Prince of Peace, who taught the love of enemies, forgiveness to the limit, and that unlovingness is the cardinal sin—and all the while believing themselves in their bitterness to be agent of God, followers of Jesus, defenders of the faith, custodians of the Bible.

And the result has been in many instances, I am sure, to drive men away from the Bible rather than to win them to it; though it must be confessed that often they who are driven are glad of the additional excuse. The Bible is still the best seller among books, and it is said that some portion of it is translated into a new language on an average of once every five weeks; but this does not mean that every copy of it sold is faithfully read, or even read at all. Says a prominent clergyman, writing on the subject: "Indifference to the Bible is one of the outstanding features of our time. The unbelieving upper classes do not scoff

at it; they do not even look at it To them it is a reminder of an age which is ended, a relic from a world which has vanished; just as a huge boulder lying quietly in a garden reminds us of a geologic age which closed centuries ago, so, in their opinion, the Bible is a sort of souvenir of a world which is now completely outgrown."

The sum and substance of it is that our age no longer holds the Bible in the sort of worshipful, or if you will, "superstitious" veneration of a few generations ago. Men, large numbers of them, no longer feel that the Bible is an explicit and exclusive guide to eternal life; and so large numbers of them ignore it, and feel entirely complacent in doing so.

But, my friends, however the traditional view and use of the Bible may need revision, can we remain unfamiliar with the greatest religious book of the world, the records of the religious experiences of those who have gone before, telling how they sought God and found Him, or failed to, and call ourselves even educated? Has religious knowledge no place in education? And more than that, it is commonly agreed that one of the most important parts of our equipment in the battle of life is knowledge of the past, familiarity with the rock whence we were hewn and the pit whence we were digged—in a word, history.

And it is generally agreed among educationists that history is through biography, stories of the lives of the outstanding men and women of the past, around whom history has centered, who themselves made history. . . . At any rate, there is a widespread feeling that this is so; and there is a great demand among the reading public for biographies.

Can we remain ignorant of the life of Jesus Christ—again, by common consent, whatever the facts concerning His birth and the miraculous stories about Him may be thought to be, the most perfect flowering of moral and spiritual manhood that the world

has produced—can we consent to be unfamiliar with His life, and not be inestimably poorer in both mental and spiritual equipment?

And the scriptures testify of Him—"These are they which bear witness of me," is as true today as it was when he said it; and how much more completely true in those writings which grew up after His time, out of His time, which we call the books of the New Testament.

How can we make ourselves familiar with His life except we familiarize ourselves with the writings which tell of Him? But that is not so easy as it seems. The Bible is not an easy book to read and understand. To treat it as a single book, with each succeeding chapter a logical sequence to what has gone before, is to wander into hopeless confusion. The Bible is a whole library of books, of very differing quality and character, with some of them of comparatively little value and interest for today, except for the historical light they throw on the days in which they were written.

One stirred by a new resolution to familiarize himself with the Bible is apt to hit upon one of two methods, or a combination of them. Either he will say to himself, "I want to know more about this great book, so I shall join a Bible class, and learn what it is really all about"; or else, "I shall begin at once, and read a chapter or two a day until I have read the whole. Then certainly I ought to know the Bible."

But either method is apt to prove disappointing. It must be confessed that there are comparatively few great Bible teachers. Plenty there are who search the scriptures and think they have learned them, but, as we have seen, with very differing and often disappointing results. And they who say they want to join a Bible class and study the Bible, generally mean in a somewhat undefined way that they think in the Bible is to be found eternal life, the rules very

explicitly and definitely laid down, if only they can have some one to point them out. But when they have tried it for a time, with only meagre returns, they are apt to fall away and give up the quest.

Anything like a scholar's acquaintance with the Bible, its origin, its history, its character, the relation of its books to each other, is a very exacting study; and few of us are prepared to pursue it.

On the other hand, if we decide to take the Bible as a single book, and read it through chapter by chapter, we are likely to start out bravely and find ourselves more or less stirred by the really magnificent old Jewish account of creation, with its recognition of God as the author of all things, and of man as made in His image; but presently we get into Leviticus, with its detailed and tedious iteration of early religious codes; or perhaps we flounder through to Numbers with its long genealogical tables—"These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred; of the sons of Issachar after their families; of Tola the family of the Tola-ites; of Pua the family of the Punites; of Jashub the family of the Jashubites"—and so on and so on—and it doesn't interest us in the least, so we give up in despair; and we haven't gotten anywhere near the heart of the book—or the books.

Is the Bible then in effect a closed book to all but scholars and exceptionally well equipped students? Not by any means! If you were a student of English literature, say, you would not go to a library and gather up the books of a whole section dealing with the subject, and expect to read them one after the other as they came. You would select here and there a book, under such guidance as you could get, and read that, and then another selected one, and so on.

Realize then, that in the Bible you have a small library of books. Read such as ap-

peal to you, leaving out for the time at least those which have no meaning for you. You will find treasures that you had not expected, writings that are timeless, that grip and hold you, because you realize that they interpret in a convincing way your own experiences and problems.

Take the book of Job, for instance, one of the really great masterpieces of all literature, dealing in dramatic form with the age-old problem of evil. Take many of the Psalms, and they will find you, as Coleridge put it, at your "deepest depths." Take some of the passages of the old prophets, and you will know without being told that they are inspired, because they inspire you—define inspiration as you will.

Above all, familiarize yourself by reading again and again the four gospels, biographies, as far as we have them, of that master life, which is the fulfilment of all that is best in the scriptures, in the history of the world. To have as part of one's mental equipment that one story of the prodigal son, so simple that a child can understand, is to be fortified in a way that almost nothing else can give, whenever the soul is hungry and athirst for God, and especially when it has felt with peculiar force the power of evil.

Search the scriptures, by all means; the imperative form of the authorized version has its significance, too. To be ignorant of the Bible and the spirit which it enshrines is to be to a large extent both uneducated and uncultured; and it is to leave the soul seriously unequipped in its quest of the way of eternal life.

WALTER WILLIAMS

The British Museum has recently acquired the manuscript of Galsworthy's *A Silent Wooing, Passing By, and On Forsythe Change*. These complete the museum's collection of the Forsythe Saga.

—*Saturday Review of Literature*.