

SOME BIBLICAL LESSONS.

MOST of you have gone to Sunday school, I guess. Some of you have gone to church, and some have read their Bibles faithfully. What magnificent lessons are to be found from religion. For instance, there is that story of Samson, the Hebrew Achilles, the Israelitish John L. Sullivan, who waded into the Philistines with the jawbone of a defunct jackass, and corded them up like leather sandwiches at a railroad lunch counter. Then the big fellow dallied with Delilah, and when he woke up he had a horse-clipper haircut, some nice iron jewelry and was short two eyes. Do you know that the American workingman reminds me of the gentleman who enlarged the lion's mouth and turned the king of beasts into a bee-gum? He starts in occasionally, armed with the jawbone of some demagogue ass, and creates widespread destruction. Then the boodle grabbers send a soft-voiced Delilah to him who lulls him to sleep, and instead of whooping through the country pulling up sub-cellars and turning artesian wells wrong side, he tramps patiently in the treadmill. A little while ago he wanted the earth, with a red fence round it; now he is content to make bricks without straw; cares not for the pop of the whip if the flesh pots arrive on time. But how long will this lethargy last? How long will the workingman dine, Lazarus-like, on the crumbs from the rich man's table? Having found that neither rebellion nor submission betters his condition, will he not, like another blind and desperate Samson, lay hold of the very pillars of the temple and bring it down with a crash about his ears? It behooves our modern Samson to be aware of the jawbones of asses and the songs of siren Delilahs; it behooves employing capitalists not to trust too much to the blindness of ignorance, nor to put their trust in the manacles of the military.

We have all read the Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Joseph was the great Hebrew grain monopolist, and land grabber, of course—the fellow that unravelled old Pharaoh's nightmare. Now, I believe the Bible, in a general way, but I think that story of Joseph pulling his coat tails off to get away from Madam Potiphar just a little bit fishy. It rests altogether on ex parte evidence. Col. Potiphar had made Josey chief pie passer in his palace, then gone off somewhere, probably with the pagan priests to look for a holy bull calf, or to attend the funeral of a cross-eyed cat. Josey and Mrs. Potiphar were left to run the house, and the latter accused the former of being entirely too fresh. Josey denied the soft impeachment and posed as a he-virgin who had resisted the song of the siren and fled from the face of the tempter. And for 3,000 years the world has accepted his story and insisted that Col. Potiphar had excellent grounds for divorce, but, groping in the blindness of paganism, could not see it. Maybe Josey's story is straight. The nature of man may have undergone a radical change in six-and-thirty years, or Mrs. Potiphar may have been passe, but the presumption is that the boy exaggerated the circumstance.

You remember the story of Balaam and his ass, well that was the first, but by no means the last donkey gifted with the power of speech. The peculiarity of Balaam's burro was that it talked sense. It was the only donkey known to history that an angel ever succeeded in heading off. Balaam was a type of political demagogue and priestly adventurer very common at the present day. He was out for the stuff, and knew how to sell himself to the best advantage. The Israelites had just emigrated from the land of mummified cats and holy crocodiles, and were making the pagans of Asia Minor hard to catch. They had put a Kibosh on the Canaanites, walked on the collar of the Amorites, drove Og and all the little Oggies into the ground with a maul, and were grinding the snickersee for the goozle of Moab. Balak, high muck-muck of the Moabites, realized that he was at the bottom of a 40-foot well with no ladder in sight. He was scared to death and afraid to run. Then, like the rest of us under similar conditions, he thought of the Lord. We always turn to the Almighty after all our friends have gone back on us. Balak felt that unless the Lord intervened in his behalf, the sons of Jacob would pass a decree changing his name to Dennis, so he bundled ambassadors off to Balaam with a hatful of shekels, asking him to come and curse Israel. He supposed that Balaam, like some of his sacerdotal successors, had the thunderbolts of the Omnipotent concealed about his person—that all he had to do was to turn 'em loose and Israel would wilt like a picnic dude in a thunder storm. Balaam said he would see about it. He knew how to play a sucker, and replied that the Powers above were not in a cursing humor. Than Balak bid higher. Balaam pretended to consent, but on the road his ass balked and Balaam made play for bigger boodle. I think the old duck, like many of the pagan priests, was a ventriloquist. He evidently got what he wanted, for he received permission to continue his journey, his burro quit blabbing and began to saw wood. But when Balaam saw the strength of Israel he realized that the jig was up. He was too smart to pray for rain when the wind was in the wrong quarter, too smooth to launch his thunderbolts at an army that could mop up the plain of Moab with Balak and his brethren, so he played for what spare cash was in sight and made a sneak.

A young lady writes me to know "what is love." What is it? I guess it must be electricity. Whenever we cannot understand exactly what a thing is, we class it with electrical phenomena. As we do not know what electricity is, such a definition is about as satisfactory as saying that water is wet. At the banquet of Plato a number of distinguished Greeks talked very learnedly about the tender passion, but they do not appear to have known much more about it than the green gosling who is suffering with his first attack. I say first attack, for it is becoming quite fashionable now-a-days to experience the delightful sensation several times. But perhaps we are not more fickle than were our ancestors, for the

New Testament speaks of a woman who planted seven husbands, and Shakespeare makes Romeo change his sweethearts with almost as much facility as he would his shirt. But, really, I think that the love that flits from flower to flower must be the attendant of Venus Pandemos. It is of the earth earthy. It is the love that causes the widow to smile through her tears; that makes the funeral baked meats furnish forth the marriage feast. Lightning may strike twice in the same place, and the Uranian Venus may rear a second altar amid the ashes of a desolated shrine—I don't know; but I am not banking on it. Many people imagine themselves in love when they are only troubled with indigestion or a disordered liver, apply for a marriage license, when what they need is a full-grown buck-saw or a 44-calibre washtub. No, young lady, I cannot tell you what love is. I used to believe in the power that made the world go round—an emanation from heaven—a portion of that bright essence increate infused into the human heart; but, after watching its vagaries for half a century, I am inclined to believe it a disease of the blood, the mad work of some yet undiscovered microbe, which therapeutics may yet provide a panacea for.

THE PARSON.

THE SOCIAL EVIL.

Can people be made good by Act of Parliament? We were under the impression that this question was decided long ago. Our attention was drawn to this matter by some items which appeared in a late issue of the *Colonist* about the grand success likely to attend the new steps lately taken with regard to what is called the social evil. A very vigorous crusade is to be instituted against all houses encouraging this evil, and all frequenters of the same. Better leave them alone. Drink, gambling, and women of a certain class will flourish in spite of enactments as long as human nature remains unchanged. Suppress by law you cannot. Cure the surface, remove the blotch from the skin, and doctors will you you drive the complaint inwards, to the destruction of the patient. Raid the houses and you spread the evil, with the effect of making that secret which is now patent. Remove the evil you cannot till, like the bodily complaint, the blood is changed, the mind altered and purified, and principle planted. Now the authorities are simply bringing about the ruin of the family. We have at present the safety valve. Remove that, and the disease will break out with violence and work insidiously to the peace of the family and the breeding of secret corruption.

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