

THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

At the recent Chicago Convention there were two able papers read on this subject; one of them by President Rush Rees, D.D. L. L. D., dealt briefly with the question of historical criticism in its relation to inspiration. The following words are very suggestive in the way that they bring out the effect of criticism in quickening one's sense of the reality of inspiration while throwing into the background dogmatic theories on the subject.

"By the fact of inspiration I mean the recognition that in the Bible the human spirit finds stimulus and instruction for those deeper movements of the soul which we call religion. This stimulus and instruction the modern historical study of the Bible brings out in clear emphasis. The theories of inspiration are the various ways in which men have undertaken to express their notion of how an infinite God ought to have indicated his will and thought to men. With these, modern historical study of the Bible has nothing whatever to do."

After pointing out the essential reverence of criticism which seeks boldly to find the true answer to every legitimate question concerning the origin and growth of different parts of the Bible the essayist describes pretty fully the influence of historical study in bringing to the front the rich life of the Bible which is independent of mere traditions and theories. The following statement is worthy of special mention.

"The Bible is offered by modern historical study as the standard for religious education, because it is the doorway that opens for the soul the way of escape from those crystallizations of religious thinking which are the cause of all formulated religion. It is most significant that when Martin Luther moved out for himself into the freedom of the Christian man, it was by following the guidance of a light that broke upon him from the words of the apostle Paul, 'The just shall live by faith.' So the Bible from the beginning, in all ages, whether to Catholic or Protestant, through its ideals of religion, and its exhibition of the soul's fellowship with the living God, has furnished the way out of formalism and slain the human spirit how it may come again into the free sunshine of the life of God in the Soul."

The mid-summer issue of St. Margaret's Chronicle is a "thing of beauty" from the charming bevy of girl editors on the first page to the last line of the magazine. The contents are quite equal to the letter press, and that is saying a good deal.

It has been pointed out that in the Canadian House of Commons and the Provincial Legislatures there are needed about 600 elected legislators, apart from the Senators, who are created by appointment. As there are usually two candidates, this would mean the need of something like 1200 men of light and leading as candidates for Canada's legislatures. Considering the number of statute makers required, the average of our parliamentarians be described as respectable. One would like, however, to see more outstanding young parliamentarians of promise.

THE PASSING OF THE POPE.

"The Grand Old Man" of the Roman Church has passed away, he has finished his work and gone to his rest. The removal of Pope Leo at the age of 94 takes away one of the most interesting figures in public life. As Protestants we cannot recognize his claim to be exclusively the successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ but we can pay a tribute to a man of wonderful energy, simplicity and piety. The question for the Cardinals is "who next?" That is their business; we have no concern with the aspirations of candidates or the intrigues of parties. One point will be watched by outsiders with interest, namely, this: Will the new Pope give up the idea of temporal power, recognize facts and come to an understanding with the Italian government? That will be a difficult thing for an Italian; and the election of a non Italian Pope, though prophesied by some, seems scarcely probable.

THAT WHICH IS STATIONERY IS DEAD.

Summer Schools in connection with theological colleges are calculated to get the preacher, young or old, who frequents them, out of the rut. Did you ever notice how you always take one particular road or path? It is the force of habit. Not less powerful is mental habit; so that the preacher, unless constantly watching and working, will get into grooves of statement and expression. He may not know it, but his hearers know. The preacher's task, standing before the same people twice fifty times a year, is more difficult than even he is aware of. It is turning one's mind inside out for inspection. At the summer school one hears papers from experts full of valuable ideas; but unless there be also good stiff discussion, much is lacking; the discussion is the great thing. We all are apt to get stationery in our ideas; and according to Bishop Westcott, "that which is stationery is dead." It would wonderfully vitalize those of us who do not profess to be other than of the plain average, to bring ourselves in touch with whatever whetstones providentially lie within reach. Among these may be named the new book, the discussion club, and the summer school. The plan of nature seems to be that the mental machinery gives out less rapidly than the physical. It is needless folly to let the mind become stationery—i. e., partially dead before its time.

EDWARD VII, THE PEACE-MAKER.

It would be a happy thing if history is able to confirm the title now occasionally given the present Sovereign of the British Empire, "Edward VII, the Peace-maker." The present King seemingly loses no opportunity of allaying international friction and promoting international good will. He placated Portugal. He succeeded at Rome in the difficult task of paying visits of courtesy to the Pope, and also to the King of Italy, without exciting the jealousy of either. His visit to France, followed

by the return visit to England of the President of the French Republic, showed him equally a king whether as friendly visitor or as cordial host. In his recent trip to Ireland, friendly wisdom and statesman-like tact have been demonstrated to a remarkable degree. King Edward as a man of sagacity, will not often "put his foot in it." Possessor of many titles, he bids fair to make permanent the noblest title of them all—"Edward VII, the Peace-maker."

"THEORY" AND PRACTICAL HINTS.

One sometimes hears the "practical" man sneer at the man of "theory" just as a certain type of old-fashioned farmer used to sneer at "book-larnin'." To-day, a new type of able and progressive young farmer is coming to the front, fresh from the Agricultural College, to show that good theory leads to good practise. As one writer puts it, material results are but the tardy signs of invisible activities. The bullet has started long before the noise of the report reaches us. The decisive events of the world takes place in the intellect.

A remarkable summary of what may be done by intelligent study is presented by the report of the British Sanitary Institute, of London, England, in session as we write. It is pointed out that since public health became a science at the beginning of the late Queen's reign the average life of a man has been increased by three years and that of a woman by five years.

To-day there are more than 600,000 persons living in Great Britain, who, had they been born before the science of public health was known, would have died before they were a year old.

Thirty years ago in Great Britain typhoid killed 374 people out of every million. To-day, with an enormously increased population, it kills a bare 100 per million. Typhus, which sixty years ago struck down another 300 per million, has been literally stamped out by sanitation. Statisticians compute that the London County Council has saved 20,000 lives, mostly infants, since its creation.

In the days of "Good Queen Bess" the death rate in England was 80 per 1,000 per annum.

Where sixty years ago 100 persons died from small pox, but about five die now. Deaths from fever have fallen by 85 per cent. From 1861-5 scarlet fever killed 892 persons per million; it now barely accounts for 100.

Consumption has now fallen within the purview of sanitary authorities. During 1861-5 death by consumption in Great Britain claimed 2,526 persons yearly out of every million. To-day a better acquaintance with the laws of health has cheated death of half the harvest of 1861-5 from this disease.

Love has no commandment; she does all things of herself spontaneously—hastens and delays not. It is enough to her that it is only shown her; she needs no driving.