

THE HIGHEST CRITICISM.

The Bible is the monumental revelation of the heart and mind of God to the mind and heart of man. It is God's book of cheer for the cheerless, of hope for the hopeless, of inspiration for pilgrims who seek the homeland of the soul. In these days many have come to fear for the fate of the Bible in the hands of scholars who are busy applying the test of the higher criticism to its sacred pages. But there is a "highest criticism" to which attention needs to be called. For the real test of the Bible is put to it not by scholastic criticism, but by the criticism of life.

When a man beset by temptation searches the Scriptures to find some reason that will make it worth while to fight against evil; or when one whose sin has found him out seeks its way of mercy and forgiveness; or when a man whose eyes are dimmed with the tears of recent sorrow turns its pages to find words of comfort in his affliction, that is the time to be afraid for the Bible. If it stands the test of life's need it can be trusted to endure easily all other tests. And this highest criticism of the Bible has produced a startling amount of evidence to prove the trustworthiness of the Book—such evidence, for instance, as is summed up in the remark of Sir Walter Scott, when he was dying. "Bring me the book," he said. "What book?" asked Lockhart. And Scott replied: "There is but one Book now. Bring me the Bible."

Questions of the date and authorship of the Scriptures have their place in the researches of learned men, exactly as the age, size, and composition of the stars are matters for astronomical science. But the light of the stars guides the voyager to his desired haven, although he may be ignorant of the fact that recent scientists have declared that the nebular hypothesis must give place to the planetesimal theory of creation. And there are things hid from the wise, as the world counts wisdom, which are revealed to simpler folk who have found the Bible to be a light to their path. Among these things the test of life stands pre-eminent. Next to that stands the test of time. Systems of thought and orders of society have been succeeded by newer systems and better orders, but during all the centuries no word of the Bible has ever become obsolete, nor has any part of its revelation been inadequate. And this is true not because the poetry of the Bible is sublime and its songs deathless. It is true not because its history is incomparable and its stories models of rhetorical simplicity. But it is true because the Bible enshrines in its matchless pages of brilliant literature and thrilling history and priceless poetry the story of God's love for man as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ.

Granted that man did not create himself, is it not to be expected that his Creator would find a way to speak to souls He had made, souls with aspirations that in their flight outstrip the sweep of flying worlds, with thoughts that outstretch the farthest horizon that telescopes can reach. Granted that such a revelation is demanded, it is to be expected that it would come to all sorts of men—to physicians and fishermen and politicians and poets and statesmen and saints. Such a revelation is bound up between the covers of the Bible. It chronicles the expectancies and longings of the world, and displays Jesus as the answer to the world's need. Because He lives in its pages the Bible not only survives the shock of hostile criticism, but it also fully meets the utmost and the age-long needs of life. —Ad' son Moore, in *The Examiner*.

Life is not so much the result of logic as of life. Anyone in harmony with God should have no trouble in accepting the teachings of Christ. When Jesus declared himself to be known of his own he voiced a profound though common truth.

THE WRITTEN AGAIN.

In the record of the Temptation, Satan is represented as having quoted from one of the Psalms. His purpose was to persuade Jesus that faith and presumption were the same thing. The quotation was comparatively literal, and with it Jesus found no fault. He did, however, teach a principle that the Tempter as usual had overlooked—that is, the relationship of truth. He might have said, The Psalm to which you refer does not stand alone. It touches the whole inspired world about it. Remember it is written again. The emphasis he laid upon the word again. That word linked the two as one. Satan was a single proof-text apologist. This argument was a stool with a single leg. Jesus also appealed to Scripture, but in its relation of text to text. Too much theology, especially of the debatable kind, is built upon the Tempter's method. We lift a single text out of its relation and attempt by this to prove that white is black. It is the again that binds the Word as one.

Science in its most recent discoveries confirms the unity of nature. From atom to mountain the chain is complete. Creation was not a series of flats, but a process. It runs through the countless ages of time. There is nothing perfect in itself. The spring is related to the sea, and the grass blade to the cedar. When the poet said to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister, he told a scientific truth. He was related to all that he saw. Man is the climax, as the Scriptures represent him. He is the older brother in a family whose members are to be numbered by the million.

In all our judgments we should remember that nothing is ever seen in its entirety. God himself is a being of relationships. His every word has reference to some other word yet to be spoken. But we judge from what we hear. The Psalms are vocal, but the Law is silent. What we term providence is only an imperfect accent to the one voice. Jacob sitting in his tent and looking at Joseph's bloody coat thought that things were against him, and they were. His hair grew white and his form bent to the earth. Was God just? That question shot through his soul like an arrow. He wanted to believe it, and did, but faith must supplement sight. He waited and waited long. For twenty years God was silent. Then he spoke again, and all was plain. The instance is not solitary. There are thousands listening for God to speak again.

Not only is this essential in our judgment of God, but also of our fellow-men. We do not know our near-by neighbors. Their lives are unrelated texts that lead us far astray. We recall a man, and he stands for thousands, whose character was misjudged by those who thought they knew him best. He lived within his own world. Few ever saw him smile, and a compliment he never learned how to give. His life was simple. A single text would seem to cover it. The written again was only legible to the few. And yet he had his own relationships. Behind that hard, stony face were the deepest fountains of sympathy and passion. His heart was as soft as the touch of God. Others read only the texts they saw. They could do nothing else, but Jesus in his broader knowledge saw what was written again. They read from the face, He from the heart.

Average all our casuistry, may not the average be the line of judgment? The relationship of strength and weakness must form the basis on which we build. Peter's denial of the Christ must be read at the foot of the inverted cross. Every life has its good and let us hope that God sees texts that we have never read. Think kindly of the erring, and when others have only censure, remember it was Jesus, and not Satan, who discovered the relationship of truth. —J. L. S., in *Philadelphia Westminster*.

PATRIOTISM THAT COUNTS.*

(By Robert E. Spear.)

"My country right or wrong, but right or wrong, my country."

That famous saying is not patriotism. In the narrow view it seems to be patriotism, but it is not. Patriotism is the true service of our nation, such service as makes it a more righteous nation and enables it to serve more righteously all the nations of the earth. To confirm and support the nation in unrighteousness is to betray it. Loyalty to our country in wrong-doing is disloyalty. The nation is bound to suffer for it, to pay the penalty in weakness and judgment. A temporary flash of victory is compensation for the long years of slow payment for iniquity.

True patriotism involves the doing of his political and social duty on the part of each man. The burdens are not rolled off on special burden-bearing classes. There will be a just division of labor. As in Nehemiah's assignments all had a share, so in the true state each man will render according to his ability and each man will receive according to his need. When men take their money and go off to enjoy it as the idle rich, or take their strength and go off and waste it as the idle poor, it is unpatriotic. The nation needs all that each man has to give, and he only is a patriot who takes hold and does his share of the nation's work and makes the interest of all society his own personal interest.

When patriotism prevails a nation will be a unit. In time of great national crisis this is what happens. Sectionalism and class prejudice disappear. Each man puts the country first and the one common object unites those who having had no such commanding center of unity were served. In Jerusalem the whole nation wrought as one, and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. What we witness thus in the critical hour of war when the nation's life seems to be imperiled we need even more in the critical hour of peace when the nation's life is really imperiled. True patriotism is the spirit which unifies men in the service of the nation in the unexciting and unostentatious days.

The days when each nation claimed the right to assert its interests against all mankind and to prosper at the cost of others are passing away. The true patriotism realizes that the interests which it must consider are the interests of all humanity. No nation stands alone any more. The prosperity of one is the prosperity of all and the sufferings of one are the sufferings of all. The new country is humanity and the citizen of the new day is the citizen of the world, who will act practically upon the long neglected word that God has made of one blood all the races of men. Our Lord was the true patriot and Paul followed him. Their eyes were upon all the end of the earth and every man was their brother.

The larger patriotism will confirm and not destroy the smaller. We shall love our blood brother better for loving every man more. Our own lands will be dearer to us because we realize that the ground of the unity of humanity is also the ground of true nationalism. He who made us all of one blood is the same as he who appointed to each nation the bounds of its habitation. He is our nation's God because he is the God of all the nations, and he will be more and dearer to us when we have led all nations to know and love him as their God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Passion for home (Psa. 137: 1-6).

Tues.—A patriot's faith (Isa. 7:1-9).

Wed.—A patriot's fears (Lam. 1: 1-2).

Thurs.—A patriot's struggle (Jhdg. 7: 15-23).

Fri.—Higher patriotism (Acts 10:28, 34, 35).

Sat.—The abiding county (Heb. 11: 10, 13-16).

*Y. P. Topic, Sunday, July 4, 1909.—Patriotism that counts (Neh. 4:6, 12-15).