

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

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A tree is known by the fruit it bears. When we pluck the luscious fruit from the branch year after year we do not need to be convinced of the goodness of the tree, we have the evidence in hand. Christians do not need to be convinced that the Bible came from God—they have seen the fruit it bears. No other book has ever had such an influence. It has always championed the right in every controversy and has never done despite to the individual who studied it. Because of its great influence, Christians believe that the Bible is a revelation from God.

MORAL INFLUENCE SPREAD ABROAD

Did you ever hear a man say, “I used to steal, lie, drink, swindle, abuse my family, gamble, break up homes, beat my debts and was an immoral citizen but I was finally induced to read some books on infidelity, atheism and doubt and now I go to church, treat my family decent, pay my debts, live a moral life, try to be a good neighbor and a good citizen as the result of the influence these books had on me”? No, and you never will for the Bible is the only book that has such an influence on men. As long as the Bible has such an influence, Christians may declare with confidence, “The Bible is God’s Word” and they may point with pride to its fruit.

HUMAN FREEDOM ADVANCED

In the days of the Old Testament all nations, except the Hebrews, were built on slavery. The Hebrew nation, even when it permitted slavery surrounded it with many alleviations and held no one in servitude more than seven years. The Roman nation with a population of about one hundred and twenty-five million held more than sixty million in the basest sort of slavery. Overworked, underfed, and killed at the pleasure of their owners, these slaves were indeed “without God and without hope” in the world. But lo, the Christ came and died, and from the very beginning slaves were received into the churches of Christ on the same basis as their masters. The New Testament teaches the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Where Christianity has gone, slavery has either retreated or been destroyed. While Mohammedanism has enslaved millions, Christianity has freed millions.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN CHANGED

In ancient times, women held a degraded place among all nations except the Hebrews. In Rome, a man might put his wife to death without a trial; in Greece the women who ministered to the lowest passions were highly honored. The Hebrews honored their wives and sisters. Who has not heard of Rebekah and Rachel, Ruth and Hannah, and Deborah and Esther? And time would fail us to tell of the woman who was once the virgin Mary, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla and a host of women who are highly honored in the Bible. The position of women in many eastern countries today is lower than that of the

Hebrew women in 1,000 B.C. It is only in Christian lands that men and women stand side by side in doing the work which the Heavenly Father gave them to do.

WORKING MEN HELPED

Manual labor is scorned in lands where the Bible has not gone. The Bible and its influence has given a dignity to labor which it never enjoyed before. Plato and Aristotle taught that labor was degrading. The Emperor Augustus ordered the execution of a senator who lowered his dignity by working in the garden to assist some friends. In the Old Testament every man was compelled to learn a trade. David was a shepherd boy; Amos, a farmer; Christ, a carpenter; some of the apostles, fishermen; and Paul was a tentmaker. It is a direct influence of the Bible which has permitted laborers to gain their rights and has given us cooperation instead of exploitation in industry. In view of these facts, is it not disgusting to hear so-called labor leaders criticize the Bible?

CIVIL GOVERNMENT HELPED

The greatest statesmen and lawmakers of all time have been influenced by the laws of Moses. Grecian and Roman law was influenced by Christianity. King Alfred based his famous laws on the Ten Commandments and the book of Leviticus. Blackstone exalts the influence of Christianity on our law. Sir Matthew Hale said, "Christianity is parcel of the common law." Daniel Webster said, "It seems to be a law of our human condition that Christianity and civilization can live and flourish together." The statesmen of the world have been unable to improve the laws given by Moses more than three thousand years ago. A prominent attorney once told me, "When I am inclined to be skeptical, I read the laws given by Moses and my skepticism vanishes."

The teaching of the Bible has advanced the cause of political liberty. Christian missionaries have carried the Bible into such countries as Turkey, Persia, China, Korea, and Japan, and Western civilization has followed with more liberal laws. The founders of the United States were Bible men and believed that our government should be founded upon that Book. Where the Bible is best loved and most freely read, the liberties of the people are most freely granted. When a tyrant seeks to take away the liberty of the people, one of his first acts is to take away the Bible and attempt to close or regulate the churches. The fountainhead of Bible translation has been Geneva, Switzerland, and it is no accident that it has also been the home of the World Court, the League of Nations, the World Red Cross, and the fountainhead of European emancipation. The rights of the common people are freely granted where the Bible is freely circulated.

LITERATURE INSPIRED

English literature began with the translation of the Bible. Shakespeare filled his writings with Bible ideas and Bible phraseology. Milton and Dante borrowed freely from the Bible. Addison, Steele, Browning, and Tennyson are filled with allusions to the scriptures. Sir Walter Scott called the Bible "The Book." *Pilgrims Progress* and *The Imitation of Christ* have been perhaps the most widely read of any books

among men save the Bible and they closely follow the Bible in spirit. Daniel Webster established his wonderful oratory upon the Bible and read the Bible through once a year. Most literature that is enduring and permanent has been inspired by the Bible. What great literary productions have been inspired by the books of infidels?

EDUCATION PROMOTED

The most fundamental and necessary truths of modern scholarships are taught in the Bible. Men who believe the Bible have founded practically all our colleges and universities. Infidelity plants no schools. Ignorance is the lot of the people where the Bible has not gone. Our own system of free schools for everybody owes its origin and growth to the principles of Christianity. The Bible is counted as the outstanding influence for education by many leading educators of the world. No other book so completely sounds every depth and touches every shore of human intellect and emotion. When the question "If you were cast on a desert island and could have only one book, which would you choose?" was asked students at George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, they were almost unanimous in their choice of the Bible. If one were interested only in literature what other book could he choose? If he believed in the inspiration of the Bible what other book would he choose? Well did Sir Isaac Newton say, "I count the scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy."

Skeptics have frequently charged that Christians seek to "bootleg" their religion into the public schools. Bootleg, indeed! The Christians have founded practically all our schools and are responsible for our school systems. The men who pay the bills have a right to say what shall be taught in their schools. If skeptics want to teach the various phases of infidelity let them build their own schools and stop "bootlegging" their doctrines into the public schools.

THE ARTS PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCED

The influence of the Bible has enriched and exalted architecture. It has inspired not mysterious caverns, dark passageways, and heathen temples trod by the feet of the few but the building of simple and beautiful buildings in every corner of the earth where the common people may go to hear the Word of Life.

The world's masterpieces of painting have been inspired by the Bible. Michelangelo's "The Bible"; da Vinci's "The Last Supper"; and Raphael's, "Sistine Madonna" together with paintings by many masters of the Madonna, the child Jesus, the crucifixion, and the ascension are all, of course, inspired by the Bible.

The Bible is filled with inspiring poetry. The Psalms are the world's noblest songs. The best of the world's music "Samson" and "Messiah"; Haydn's "Creation"; Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" and "Elijah"; the passion music of Bach all were inspired by the Bible.

CONCLUSION

Women have been exalted, slaves freed, working men given their rights and civil government helped; education has been promoted, literature inspired, and the best

of the world's music and painting inspired all by the influence of one Book—the Bible. No other book has had such an influence. Homer and Plato did not do as much for Greece, nor Cicero and Virgil for Rome; Confucius did not do it for China nor the Koran for Arabia. The “sacred books” of the East have not even begun to bear such fruit. Why has the Bible been the fountainhead of civilization? Is it not because the eternal Spirit of God inspired the writing of its pages?~

Deceased