

all, it is no longer on terms of sympathetic intercourse, for the workman supposes the rich man considers that he is bending to greet his inferior, and resents the imagined condescension as an insult. I am not a rich man and I am a hard worker. I therefore once applied for admission to the United Order of Workmen. I was refused; my fellow-workmen evidently imagined I had some sinister motive. They could not conceive that my object in life was the same as theirs—to work for the common good, while not indifferent to individual interests. This mutual suspicion sooner or later engenders antagonism. Thus drifting asunder, the employer arms and strengthens himself by strengthening his combination, and the workman joins the Union, where he finds kindred spirits, inspired by kindred interests and too often swayed by kindred prejudices and passions.



The Bible and the Child¹

The Higher Criticism and the Teaching of the Young

By the Rev. Robert F. Horton, D.D.

To some of us it is a matter of amazement that the misunderstandings—I will not venture to say the misrepresentations—connected with this subject should be so persistent and obstinate. It taxes all our charity to find men, good men, presumably religious men, continuing to discuss the question in a spirit of blind and uninquiring prejudice. They will not take the trouble to learn what it is, about which they so confidently affirm. With a scorn which is the twin sister of ignorance, they seek to stamp out truth by humiliating and deriding its advocates. Were ever the genuine advocates of truth so intemperate, so denunciatory, so blind, and so ignorant as the men who have been loudest in the outcry against the Higher Criticism? The only parallel in history is the tone of the Pope—the infallible Pope—and even the Pope is nowadays more courteous. I hope it is not a severe judgment, but I believe this tone of anger and vehement anathema is found only, and can be found only, when men are defending positions which in their hearts they suspect to be insecure. When the foundations are suspected, the defenders will use any device to prevent an examination of them. If you propose to rest your religion on an infallibility of any sort, the only chance is to surround your infallibility itself with an inviolable ring which forbids criticism, and to resent any suggestion of doubt, dealing with it as impiety to be denounced, and not as argument to be met. Now, what is the issue in this long and excited controversy? It is simply this: Are we required to accept the Bible—just as it stands—as the voice of God in such a sense that to question any of its assertions is blasphemy, or to examine the composition of its books is an offense against the Holy Spirit who wrote it? Or, on the other hand, are we permitted and even required to study the books, and find out all we can about them, in just the same way that we deal with other literature, and then allow the voice of God to speak to us as it will through the books thus studied and understood?

The old orthodoxy, which these angry critics still accept, decided the question in the first way. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation was a smooth, consistent voice of God, like a Delphic Oracle. One was to read it as God's letter to the human race. If you came across any contradictions or inconsistencies, you were to attribute these to your own feebleness of apprehension, but never allow that there could be anything wrong in the book. Piety was to be proved by showing that the inconsistencies were harmonized. If, for example, it said in 2 Chron. xvii., 6, that Jehoshaphat "took away the high places and the Asherim out of Judah," and then in chapter xx., 33, "howbeit the high places were not taken away," it was a proof of reverence to the infallible Word to show how the high places were both taken away and not taken away by Jehoshaphat, because "the Word of God" cannot be broken. If in

reading the Bible you came across sentiments of fierce retaliation or deeds of savage bloodthirstiness, against which a man of ordinary morality might naturally revolt, it was your duty to justify these sentiments because they were the Word of God, and to find excuses for the deeds because they were recorded without censure in the Word of God. You were not allowed to argue that because the sentiment was not godly it could not come from God, or because the deed was unchristian it could not be approved by God. That was treated as presumption, as judging God, as setting up the intellect against its Maker.

This was, and is, the decision of the old orthodoxy. And what is the result? Plymouth Brethrenism on the one hand and infidelity on the other. The simple fact is that this old view of the Bible is not justified by any assertion of the Bible itself, unless some misquoted and misapplied texts, which even ignorance hesitates to cite, are to carry the day—texts just as much misquoted, misapplied, as those which are supposed to support the Papacy; nor is that old view supported by any external authority of Church or Council, or even unbroken tradition. It is not consistent with the use which the New Testament writers made of the Old; and it goes to pieces, like a mummy brought into the fresh air, directly any unbiased mind begins to study and examine the Bible to see exactly what it is.

Now, of course I am not contending that the critics are right in their conclusions; all I say is that they are justified in their methods. Not only are we allowed, we are literally required, before the Bible can give its real message to the world, to bring every resource of scholarship, the examination and collation of manuscripts, the emendation of the text, the consideration of authorship and style, the internal evidences of dates, the witness of archaeology and history, and above all the developed system of Christian life and teaching, to settle the exact bearing, relation, and authority of each book and each section of the Bible. Unless and until this is done, the Bible may be wrested, by selected citation, by ignorant confusion of dates and purposes and application, or by an arbitrary method of allegorizing, to teach just what each man wishes it to teach. And in place of the Divine Truth, which must be one and absolute, you have every man his own exegete, and every exegete his own Pope; and presently, as the system develops, you have the world rising up impatiently against these myriads of petty Popes, as it did once before against the imposing though effete single Pope. The answer to Popery is not that private judgment which makes every one an authority entitled to speak *ex cathedra* from the Bible, but that free, honest, and reverent study of the Scriptures, aided by all the best scholarship of the age, which tends more and more to make Biblical theology an intelligible and progressive system, and in its highest Christian development a final test and authority in religion.

It is no answer to the critical method to prove that Wellhausen has made mistakes—the critical method is not bound up with the infallibility of Wellhausen—or that Cheyne is arbitrary in fixing the dates of the Psalms. The only real refutation of it would be to furnish some proof from the Bible, or from God, that we are forbidden to make these candid inquiries into the structure of the literature; or, if you will, to show that the Christian religion is injured instead of being cleared and strengthened by the fearless use of those faculties which God has given us for the discovery of truth. Neither of these has been done. Indeed, I will venture to close with an illustration, which is one of a thousand easily adducible, to show how *religion* gains, if orthodoxy suffers, by the candid work of criticism.

Let us turn to the 137th Psalm. I suppose no one was ever so far blinded by tradition as to think that David was its author. It tells its own tale. It was written five centuries after David's time, by an exile in Babylon. But according to the traditional orthodoxy this exile psalmist was the penman of the Holy Ghost. He uttered the sentiments which God breathed into his heart and told him to commit to writing. Any of these verses might therefore be quoted as *the word of God*. That was the theory. And consequently it must be regarded as a beatitude pronounced by God on any man who should take the little innocent

¹ The first article in this series, by Dean Farrar, was published in The Outlook for March 21.

Babylonian children and dash them against the rock. It is not a sentiment that seems suitable in the heart of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the old orthodoxy must bear its own responsibility for maintaining a dogma which made such a conclusion inevitable. But there was a greater difficulty still. The Lord had spoken through Jeremiah xxix., 7, commanding the exiles to seek the peace of Babylon and to pray to him for it. How could the same God have breathed into the exile psalmist this cruel and bloodthirsty sentiment?

I need not labor the point to prove how religion gains, how the truth of God gains, how Christ's view of God is established, by a mode of handling the Bible which emphatically denies that this bitter thought of the exile was God's thought at all—a mode of handling the Bible which, instead of treating every passage in the Bible as the Word of God, seeks diligently to find and understand the Word of God, which is unquestionably there.

The Higher Criticism, we may depend on it, is of God, and, whatever is to be said of individual scholars, the *method* must prevail, to the lasting benefit of religion, of the Church, and of mankind.

When it is once realized that the result of criticism has been, and will be still more, not to lessen but to intensify the spiritual value and the teaching power of the Bible, it will be the plain duty of both parents and Sunday-school teachers to start in the instruction of their children from the position which criticism has securely established. The baseless dogma about the nature of the Bible must not be given to the children; the Bible itself must be given. But more. Not only must the Bible itself be given, but it must be given with so clear and convincing an explanation of what the Bible actually is that children may escape the "sunless gulfs of doubt" into which we and our fathers were plunged.

I have mentioned Psalm cxxxvii. as an instance of the spiritual illumination and the clearing of the ethical teaching which may be gained by fearlessly applying criticism to Scripture. I was very much affected by the words of a dear old friend, a faithful and loving Christian from his boyhood, who told me how a difficulty of many years' standing had been removed by my exposition of this Psalm. How could it be otherwise? What miserable confusion must be wrought in the mind of a child if he is taught that the awful imprecation, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock," is the Word of God! It is impossible, in the face of such an error, to give children a true idea of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor can I forget the storms of unbelief to which I was subjected as a boy in preparing the Book of Judges for a Cambridge Local Examination. No pastor or master ever hinted to me that the deeds of treachery or blood in that book, wrought by men on whom the Spirit of God was said to have come, were not approved by God himself. I supposed that the dastardly deed of Jael was religiously praiseworthy, and that Samson must be a character that we should do well to copy.

I know, of course, that a large proportion of the boys brought up with me on the same principles of Biblical interpretation have actually become unbelievers—or, at least, callously indifferent to the Bible. A few like myself have been saved from that melancholy fate by the revealing light and truth which, under the hand of diligent critics, "have broken forth from the Word" in the last twenty years.

And if I may be pardoned another personal reminiscence, the first shock to faith which I received in Oxford was not from the so-called unbelief, or from the philosophical speculations of the University, but from preparing the Book of Acts for the entrance examination. It was in a shady room, looking out on the loveliness of the New College gardens, that I was confronted by the fact that the speech of Gamaliel referred to certain predatory outbreaks which did not occur until *after* the date of his speech. If I had encountered such an error in Thucydides or Livy, it would not have shaken my confidence in those great historians; but to meet with a his-

torical slip in an Infallible Book shook the whole untenable foundation of my faith. I speak, therefore, from my own experience of sorrowful and unnecessary shocks to the religious life when I plead that a true view of what the Bible is should be placed before children from the beginning.

I think I must also mention an incidental injury which a wrong conception of the Bible has wrought in the training of the young. The unreality and tedium of much Sunday-school teaching, which issue in the children leaving early and imbibing a permanent dislike to the Christian Church, must have an explanation. It is easy to lay the blame at the door of the teachers. It is inadmissible to charge the fault on the Bible itself. Surely the mistake lies in the conception of the Bible which most teachers are themselves taught, and feel in their turn bound to teach. They have to smooth over and explain away the moral incongruities or the historical discrepancies of Old Testament Scriptures. They have to give an allegorizing meaning to passages which in the original intention could have had no such meaning. For instance, a worthy correspondent assured me, some years ago, that Esther was to him the most precious of books, because after much prayer it had been revealed to him that Ahasuerus is Almighty God, Mordecai our Lord Jesus Christ, and Haman the Devil. My correspondent is the editor of a widely read newspaper, and represents the orthodox ideas of Bible interpretation. But to teach children a view of that kind is fatal. It not only must destroy all respect for the Bible; but what an idea of God must it give them if they are to see him in the arbitrary and sensual Persian king, or what an idea of our Lord if they are to interpret him by the hard and cruel character of that bitter-hearted Jew! As for Haman, I am ready to admit that he may present a plausible portrait of the Devil; but it would leave on the child's mind the impression that the Devil has been hanged, which is unfortunately not true.

Every child should be taught from the first that the Bible is a compilation of many different books, written by different authors, and at widely different periods of time. He should be taught that these books constitute a rough record of the stages by which God has been revealed to the world, and of the difficulties, the doubts, the rebellions which his gradual self-revelation has encountered among men. No word should be said about the Bible being infallible, for the term is wholly misleading. And every effort should be made to show that *Christ is the end of the law*, so that the teaching should rather be what Christ is, has done, and is doing in the world to-day than the slow and dubious steps by which the world was prepared for his coming. The latter is a necessary study for theologians. The former alone is needed for, and is capable of riveting the attention of, our little children.



Work and Play¹

By Hamilton W. Mabie

Nothing in natural processes is more suggestive than the apparent ease with which the greatest power is put forth and the most diverse and difficult tasks accomplished. Nature never rests and yet is always in repose; she never ceases to work and yet always appears to be at play. The expenditure of power involved in the change from winter to summer is incalculable; but the change is accomplished so quietly and by such delicate gradations that it is impossible to associate the idea of toil with it. There is no strenuous putting forth of force; there is rather the overflow of a fathomless life. The tide of life runs to the summit of the remotest mountain which nourishes a bit of verdure as easily as the water sweeps in from the sea when the tide turns and the creeks and inlets begin to sing once more in the music of returning waves. The secret of this silent, invisible, easy play of force and accomplishment of ends lies perhaps in perfect adaptation of instrument to task, in absence of friction, in complete harmony between power, methods, and ultimate aims. The entire harmony which

¹ From *Essays on Nature and Culture*. (Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.)