The Bible Today

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The 400th anniversary of the printing of the Bible in English has been widely celebrated throughout the Christian world. It is an appropriate time to appraise the influence of this book upon life and character.

The Bible is much more than a collection of books embodying the religious faith of an ancient people. It is a survey of the varied experiences of man, a mirror of triumph and failure, hope and fear, strength and weakness. Running like a thread of gold through Biblical history and philosophy, poetry and drama, prophecy and exhortations, letters and admonitions, there is the underlying theme of man's relation to God and his obligation to his fellowman.

The Bible has exerted a profound influence also upon the cultural life of the race throughout the ages. It was the inspiration of much of the art of the renaissance. One only needs to walk through the great galleries of Western Europe to realize the debt of art to this book of books.

The translations of the Bible into English by Tyndale, Coverdale, Rogers and Cranmer gave form to the English language and paved the way for the King James Version, which is the greatest of all English classics. The Elizabethan lyrical poets derived the rhythm of their verse from one of the earlier English versions of the Bible. There are nearly a thousand quotations in Shakespeare to the Bible, and Milton and Bunyan got their themes from it. It is impossible to read understandingly the great poets without a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

It is obvious that a body of religious literature of such significance cannot be ignored by any one in any age. A knowledge of the Bible is an essential part of every man's education, regardless of his vocation or profession. But above all else, the Bible is our best guide to faith and conduct.

Men of other days, like Bright and Gladstone, Lincoln and Wilson, knew the Bible and liked to quote from it. Men and women of today, particularly young men and women, should seek to know this book as a means of giving them a better understanding of their religious heritage as well as a better appreciation of the cultural things of life.

The world will not outgrow the Bible. There have always been those who have been indifferent to it, but every one is the beneficiary of its influence. I commend its teaching to the youth of the land. In this time of perplexity and uncertainty, it should prove of inestimable value to those seeking a better way of living. The solution of many of the perplexing problems of today would be easier if the precepts of the Bible should find expression in the lives of the youth who must soon assume the responsibilities of leadership in the various fields of human activity.