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The Bible as Literature.

"It would be interesting to trace the parallel course in modern literature of pagan and Biblical influences. I venture to think that the result of such an examination would come as a surprise to some of those who have ignored the Bible as a training school in the art of expression. It is but touching the fringe of the subject to point to the fact that one of the most widely read books -- next to the Bible itself -- 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' owes its inspiration almost exclusively to the Sacred Volume, and that without the same Book, the work achieved by Ruskin, Carlyle and many other modern authors, would scarcely have been possible. The ramifications of this influence, indeed, are endless. The most unlikely authors reveal its traces and admit its formative power. No fiercer opponent of Christianity has existed in our day than Nietzsche, but it was Nietzsche who said: 'In the Jewish Old Testament, the book of divine justice, there are men, things and sayings on such an immense scale that Greek and Latin literature has nothing to compare with it.'

"Therefore, it seems to me that Sister Eleanor, C.S.C., is well within the truth when she says in 'Certitudes' (the little volume of essays she has recently published): 'From the fact that such a large number of artists in prose attribute their success to assiduous reading of the Bible, I believe it is no exaggeration to conclude that the Bible is the finest literary training school there is; and I am convinced that any one who reads the Bible for a half-hour a day with a seeing eye and an understanding ear will soon acquire mastery of the sound values of words and the harmonies of phrasing.....'

"Literature is made of the very stuff of life, and the more our lives are molded and directed by the Bible, the more capable we shall be of producing great literature. To write greatly is almost impossible to one who does not live greatly. Milton told us that the life of a great poet should be in itself a great poem. One of the surest means to great living is the daily reading of the Gospel, for thus we keep before our minds the example of Christ. There can, then, be no doubt that the finest training school for the writer is the Bible, which gives him both the matter and the manner of his art.'

"That leaves little more to be said. Let us by all means, as I have myself urged, utilize for the glory of God and the defense of the Faith the work of pagan writers; but do not let us imagine that they possess a monopoly of literary culture, or that it is to them we must necessarily turn if we would arrive at original sources. In the Hebrew Scriptures we have a literature as sublime as anything among the classics, but, in addition, one which is the vehicle of that Revelation of which the Church is the appointed guardian and sole interpreter."

-- The Ave Maria, Feb. 7, 1928, Stanley B. James.

Questions From the Questionnaire.

79. Why do you think God calls so many students without warning?

Ans. We do not know what goes on in God's mind, what is in His divine providence, unless he tells us. We can see in the fact that most of our students who die at school are called without a chance for confession, a warning to ourselves always to live in the state of grace.

80. How can one conquer impure thoughts and actions?

Ans. 1. Use daily Communion; 2. Ask for advice to suit your particular case. If you control your thoughts your actions are not hard to control. If you guard the outposts of your thoughts - your eyes and ears - it is not hard to guard your thoughts. Play hard, study hard, watch your companionship, and you will usually have little or no difficulty. If you need further advice, ask for it.

PRAYERS: Deceased - relatives of Jim Cole, ex-'33 and John J. Ryan (Badin).