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A BIBLE FOR SCHOOLS

Here in the German Federal Republic the curriculum comprises two or three lessons in religious knowledge per week. Added to this two additional catechumen lessons are given in church rooms, over a period of two years, as a preparation for confirmation. The syllabus in both cases contains Biblical themes—slightly varying in the various Landeskirchen (Churches of Bavaria, Rhineland, Württemberg, etc.). This is the reason why more than half of the Bibles distributed by the Württembergische Bibelanstalt go through schools. Both the civic and church bodies give a Bible as a text-book free of charge to every pupil.

Various types of Bible are designed to meet the specific demands of school work. For a considerable number of years there have been editions of Bible stories for the lower forms and editions of selections for the upper grades (pupils from 7 to 10 years and from 11 to 15 years respectively). The pupils are led on to the whole Bible by these Bible selections and Bible story books. In 1964 the Württembergische Bibelanstalt published a new Schulbibel for the upper grades. Towards the upper end of this age-group a pocket edition of the whole Bible is used in addition to this Schulbibel, its smaller size not allowing for the inclusion of many references. The selections had to be carefully chosen, in order to produce a book, a handy size for school-bags, thus allowing the pupils to work at home and at school with the same copy (there are hardly any boarding schools in Germany). India-paper is not suitable for school use. With this end in view various church syllabuses were compared, and the most comprehensive were used as a basis for the new enterprise. Important parts, as for instance the stories of Joseph, are not included in the scheme for the upper age-groups, and have been told in a condensed version. The only Gospel given in full text is that of Mark. Passages common to Matthew and Luke have also been included. Matthew, chapters 25–28 are printed in full, and from the concluding chapters of Luke the following passages have been taken: 22: 31–38; 23: 1–46; 24: 13–53. These limited selections help to provide a convenient size of book, but show the need for some complete Bibles for the reading of the full text in school. Thus the pupil is led step by step to the Bible. When it comes to the syllabus of the eighth class dealing with difficult passages such as the Letters of Paul, the selections and introductions of the Schulbibel invite more extensive reading.

The teaching-helps are a very important part of the Schulbibel. For example:
After the Story of the Temptation (Matt. 4: 1–11) the following topic for discussion is given:

'People say there is no Devil!'

The arguments of the pupils should be kept close to the text. At the same time the discussion must deal with the meaning of this account for people of today. It might start with generalities:

> You can't see the Devil. What do we learn about him in this story? Even Jesus had to experience how the Devil tries to tempt us. At first we do not notice that he wants to lead us to do wrong. He is speaking to Jesus like a friend. He asks him to tell the stones to become bread. Jesus was famished. For forty days he had fasted. Why should he, being the Son of God, be hungry? Doesn't the Devil seem to mean well? If Jesus made bread not for himself only, but for his followers too, lots of people would come to him at once. Doesn't the Devil mean well in the second temptation—and in the third? But verse 8 and 9 certainly show that he wants to lead Jesus to do wrong.
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> The tempter is always speaking like this. We know about that from the story about the fall of man . . . we know about that from our own experience. Once Jesus called even Peter 'Satan'. Peter also meant well.
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> Often the voice of the Devil is not easily detected. That is why lots of people say there is no Devil. We must be on the look out.

This example demonstrates how the topics can create a lively discussion. The teacher must not lecture like a German professor, but should take the risk of free discussion to confront himself and his pupils with the Word of God.

In order to make sure that such a lively discussion be guided by the actual text of the Bible itself, this text ought to be one which can be easily understood. Unfortunately the new revised Luther Bible is too difficult for children. Many of its expressions would be marked as a mistake in the German lessons. Therefore a team of theologians and teachers was given the task of verse by verse revision—with the exception of the passages to be learnt by heart. For example: whilst the official Luther Bible does not make clear that Mary was betrothed to Joseph, the Schulbibel says so expressly. Children are thus able to follow the course of the Biblical story and will not have further difficulties in following and understanding the more 'musical' Luther text.

Illustrations in a book are the first words to the reader. They may arouse the first love for the new book or they may cause strong feelings of distaste. The greatest difficulty appeared to be the fact that children obviously have a different approach to illustrations from that which grown-ups have. For that reason the schemes for illustrations which were first tried out had to be abandoned, namely a progression through the history of Art, a choice limited to the early Middle Ages, and the juxtaposition of old and new. The form and colour of expressionist paintings have the maximum appeal, and so they are in the majority; even abstract art is represented by some examples. The illustrations, painted in 1949, by Alfred Manessier adhere closely to their Biblical subject. Their sequence makes a unity. This series has been inserted (with the exception of the Crucifixion) next to the Letter to the Philippians. Their message has its genuine significance in connection with the 'theology of the Cross'. Thus the illustrations cannot appear to have been inserted at

Die Bergpredigt

5 Als Jesus die Volksmenge sah, ging er ins Bergland, und als er sich setzte, traten seine Jünger zu ihm. 2 Er tat seinen Mund auf und lehrte sie:

Die Seligpreisungen

3 Selig sind, die da geistlich arm sind; denn das Himmelreich ist ihr.
4 Selig sind, die da Leid tragen; denn sie sollen getröstet werden. 5 Selig sind die Sanftmütigen; denn sie werden das Erdreich besitzen. 6 Selig sind, die da hungert und dürstet nach der Gerechtigkeit; denn sie sollen satt werden. 7 Selig sind die Barmherzigen; denn sie werden Barmherzigkeit erlangen. 8 Selig sind, die reines Herzens sind; denn sie werden Gott schauen. 9 Selig sind die Friedfertigen; denn sie werden Gottes Kinder heißen. 10 Selig sind, die um Gerechtigkeit willen verfolgt werden; denn das Himmelreich ist ihr.

11 Selig seid ihr, wenn euch die Menschen um meinetwillen schmähen und verfolgen und alles Böse von euch sagen, wenn es eine Lüge ist.
12 Seid fröhlich und getrost; denn euer Lohn im Himmel ist groß. Denn so haben sie die Propheten verfolgt, die vor euch gewesen sind.

«Selig» bedeutet so viel wie «glücklich zu preisen».
zu Vers 3 Gemeint sind die Menschen, die mit leeren Händen vor Gott stehen und ganz auf ihn angewiesen sind. Man kann auch übersetzen: Selig sind die Armen im Geiste; denn das Himmelreich ist für sie da.
zu Vers 9 «friedfertig sein» heißt: «Frieden stiften».
Schon im Alten Testament war von einem entscheidenden Geschehen auf einem Berg die Rede! – Vergleiche zu den Seligpreisungen folgende Geschichten: 1. Mose 13; Luk. 7,11–17; 9,51–56; 10,25–37; 18,9–14; Apg. 6,8–7,59; Offb. 7,9–17! Welche anderen Geschichten können wir hier noch anführen?

Der Auftrag an die Jünger

13 Ihr seid das Salz der Erde. Wenn das Salz kraftlos wird, wie soll es wieder zu Salz werden? Es taugt zu nichts mehr, als daß man es hinausschüttet und die Leute es zertreten.

14 Ihr seid das Licht der Welt. Es kann die Stadt, die auf einem Berge liegt, nicht verborgen sein. 15 Man zündet auch nicht ein Licht an und setzt es unter ein Gefäß, sondern auf einen Leuchter; so leuchtet es allen, die im Haus sind. 16 So soll euer Licht leuchten vor den Leuten, daß sie eure guten Werke sehen und euren Vater im Himmel preisen.

Viele meinen: «Von meinem Glauben braucht niemand etwas zu merken»! Was erwartet den Jünger, der Jesu Gaben für sich behält? Wozu führen die «guten Werke» der Jünger? – Vergleiche Kap. 28,16–20!

random. They are a means to contemplative thinking, closely connected with the Biblical text.

The characteristics mentioned above aim at giving an immediate interest to this edition. In addition the Schulbibel provides information about the history of the Bible and the characteristics of the various Biblical books. This is included in each introduction and the brief notes at the end of the various sections.

At the end of the book is an Appendix containing Notes on the illustrations, a chronological table, and four coloured maps.

The preface starts as follows:

> 'Our grand-parents dressed in a fashion different from the way we do. You can see that from the old paintings. . . . Things people liked at that time, seem a little strange to us. So the appearance of books changes too.
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> 'Here is a book which has often changed its appearance. This book, however, can never be out of date for through it the living God speaks to men of every age. It is of vital importance that we, the people of today, should understand His word. The modern appearance of the Schulbibel will assist us to do so.'

One page of the Schulbibel with the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount and a wood-cut (inserted elsewhere) by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff 'The Way to Emmaus' are reproduced here to give the readers of *The Bible Translator* an impression of this edition. Notes printed in roman type explain single words (for instance 'blest'), *italics* are intended to arrest the reader's attention; for instance as at the foot of the page: 'Many people think: There is no need to let people know about my faith!'

It is not possible to analyse completely which of these features produce the general effect of the Schulbibel. The complex unity, and not isolated detail, promote devotion, instruction, and study. The Schulbibel does not speak only if the teacher orders it to be opened for the lesson. It seeks to guide the pupils to read and think. The first impression of the pupils must be the right one: 'The Bible is the living word of God'.