

TREASURY OF TRUTH NO. 242

The

WONDERFUL
WORD *of* GOD

by

DAVID KIRK



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FOREWORD

It gives me pleasure to commend to the reader this little booklet, "THE WONDERFUL WORD OF GOD," for the author has given us a very needed and helpful treatise on the Bible. It should appeal to the young convert, the student, the saint and the sage. It should help clear away doubt, and establish the faith of the young Christian, and refresh the hearts of those who have reached maturity in divine things. What Matthew Henry said of a section of the Bible, may be truly said of all: "In it are shallows where lambs may safely wade, deeps where elephants drown."

When we are told that modern science contradicts the Word of God, we feel very thankful that it does so; for, if the Scriptures were as unstable as modern science, we Christians would be of all men most miserable. Modern science changes every few years, but the Bible remains unchangeable and unalterable. Like the LIVING WORD it is "The same yesterday, and to-day and forever" (Heb. 13: 8). The Bible deals with facts and not with theories; and while it is not a Book of Science, yet it is a scientific Book, for when the Bible makes a scientific statement, that statement can be relied upon.

I pray that this useful booklet will have a wide circulation, and will be blessed of the Lord. Dr. A. T. Pierson has said of the Bible: "While other books inform, and some reform, this one Book *transforms*. "The Psalmist said, "For Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name" (Psalm 138: 2).

JAMES F. SPINK, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the summer of 1946, when present at the Greenwood Hills Bible Conference, I had the privilege of giving an address on the Bible. Mr. P. D. Loizeaux of New York kindly suggested the address might be printed; so, with others urging, I have consented.

Obviously I cannot claim originality for all that is written, but this is not desired. Unhesitatingly, I avow my indebtedness to the many authors whose works I have consulted, and in some cases, quoted. I would like to mention all, but this is not possible; however, my hearty thanks I do express for all help obtained.

Special mention must be made of the poems: "GOD'S TREASURE," "BOOKS AND THE BOOK," "MY OLD BIBLE," and "THE WORD OF GOD." These are from 235 PRECIOUS POEMS, Compiled by Clifford Lewis, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am indebted to Mr. Lewis, who has kindly given permission to use them.

My good friend, Mr. J. F. Spink, with whom I shared the ministry at the Conference, has graciously consented to write a Preface, and this is certainly appreciated.

If some into whose hands this little book falls are led to a keener appreciation of God's precious Word through reading its pages, I shall feel well repaid for any effort expended to send it forth. That God will deign to use it for His glory is the humble, but earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

1947

The Word of God

1 1 1

Thy Word, O God, is very pure;
Heaven-breathed—and shall endure,
Everlasting, ever sure.

Psalm 119: 140.

2 Timothy 3: 16.

1 Peter 1: 25.

Wondrous things we there behold,
Opened without stint or measure;
Riches there Thou dost unfold,
Drawn from Thy heart's deep treasure.

Psalm 119: 18.

John 3: 34 (R.V.).

Psalm 119: 72.

Romans 11: 33.

Ocean-depths of truth are there,
Fathomless,—beyond compare.

1 Cor. 2: 9, 10.

Prov. 3: 13-15.

Grace and Truth make known to me,
Only, Lord, that I may be
Diligent in pleasing Thee.

John 1: 17.

Ezra 7: 10.

Col. 1: 9, 10.

T.D.W.M.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE TREASURE

‘ ‘ ‘

I have a wonderful Treasure,
The Gift of God without measure;
We will travel together—
My Bible and I.

‘ ‘ ‘

So sing the children in Sunday School. Perhaps unthinkingly they sing the words but maybe no more so than older people, and even mature Christians. How few there are who seem to truly appreciate the Bible as a Treasure from God, or make it their constant companion. How little is known of the Book.

Edison, of electric light fame, is reported to have said, "We do not know one millionth part of one per cent about anything." One wonders if that cannot be said about our knowledge of the Bible.

The late R. C. Chapman of Barnstaple, England, familiarly known as "The Barnstaple Patriarch," made a habit of reading the Bible through several times each year. He is reported to have gone over it no less than 220 times in his lifetime (he passed away in his hundredth year); yet, when someone remarked in his hearing that he must know all there is to know in the Bible, he replied, "I have barely touched the fringe."

I recall when a boy seeing a particular Bible advertised in the window of a bookseller. There was a large placard with many questions pertaining to the Bible printed on it, and underneath were these words: "These questions can be answered by anyone who has mastered this Bible." I have many times doubted the correctness of that statement. One may "master" the notes and helps of any particular Bible, but the contents of the Book itself will only be known in their fulness when we see the Author "face to face."

A visitor to the City of Belfast in the North of Ireland on the "Twelfth" (July 12) will see a sight that has no parallel in the world; Ulstermen everywhere know it as "The Orange Walk." Scores of the Lodges congregate and pass a given point, and this often requires almost three hours. There is music of every kind, and thousands flock along the route to hear the bands and see the beautiful banners. A favorite banner is that depicting Queen Victoria of England with the plenipotentiaries of another country in her presence. The distinguished visitors are enquiring the secret of England's greatness, to which Her Majesty is making the significant reply, "Sirs, the Bible."

Again we hear the children sing:

The Queen was asked upon a day
Wherein the nation's power lay:
She very soon was heard to say,
"It lies within the Bible."

Recently I read a copy of a letter dated August 25th, 1862, written by the late David Livingstone to a fellow-missionary of the London Missionary Society. Referring to his native isle, he said, "The Bible is recognized more and more widely as the cause of England's prosperity." Would that we could say that today.

Those were the good old "Victorian" days, some of my readers may sigh. Yes, indeed; we may have made some wonderful progress in the fields of science and learning, but what England, America and every other so-called Christian country needs, is—to get back to the Bible.

In 1933 the British Government paid to Russia the sum of one hundred thousand pounds (Sterling) for one of the most ancient Biblical manuscripts extant—The Codex Sinaiticus. The story of its discovery years before is very interestingly told in "How we Got our Bible" (J. Paterson Smyth). Briefly, it is as follows:

While scouring the East in search of ancient manuscripts of the Bible, Dr. Tischendorf, the famous German scholar, came across it in the Monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai; this was in the year 1844. Strangely enough, it was lying in the waste paper basket of the library together with old parchments. His joy overflowed as he realized he was holding in his hands a number of sheets of a copy of the Septuagint (Greek) Old Testament. He evinced such pleasure that the

monks became suspicious as to the value of the manuscript; although, in their ignorance, they had already used many of the sheets in the fires. They now decided to guard the treasure closely, and it was not until fifteen years later (1859) that the learned doctor actually got his hands upon the remainder of the precious leaves. He managed to secure the influence of the Emperor of Russia, and finally succeeded in having the valuable manuscript stored in the Library of St. Petersburg. How thankful all Bible-lovers are to know that today it reposes safely in the British Museum, London. What an interesting place that Museum is; but, perhaps that dear old Bible may be safely classed as "Exhibit, No. 1."

I read a delightful little story the other day, and I pass it on to you now: A missionary in the West Indies undertook to teach an old negro how to read the Bible. So anxious was the dear fellow to learn, that although he worked hard, he came at every opportunity to the missionary's home to study; here he struggled laboriously to master the words. There was little progress, so at last the poor missionary, whose patience was well-nigh exhausted, suggested to his pupil he had better give up. With great earnestness showing in his dark face the disappointed disciple replied, "No, Massa, me neber gib it up till me die." Then pointing with his finger to the golden text—John 3: 16—he slowly spelled the words, and with tears in his eyes continued, "It

worf all de trouble, Massa, to read dat one verse.”
That simple testimony is worth its weight in gold.

My reader, do you value the Bible like that? Is
it to you the “treasure” the children sing it is?

God's Treasure

‘ ‘ ‘

There is a Treasure,
Rich beyond measure,
Offered to mortals today.
Some folk despise it,
Some criticise it,
Some would explain it away.

Some never read it,
Some never heed it,
Some say ‘It’s long had its day’;
Some people prize it,
And he who tries it
Finds it his comfort and stay.

God gave this Treasure,
Rich beyond measure,
His Word, we call it today.
Let us believe it,
Gladly receive it,
Read, mark, and learn to obey.

—A. M. N.

CHAPTER TWO

ITS INSPIRATION

1 1 1

It is said of the late Sir Walter Scott, famed author of the Waverley novels, that, on one occasion while on a sick bed he requested of his son-in-law, Lockhart, "Bring the Book." In reply to his question, "Which book?" the younger man was amazed to hear the distinguished novelist say, "There is only one book—the Bible."

Of all the books I ever read,
There's no book like the Bible.

The word Bible comes from the Greek word "biblia" which is the plural of "biblion" (book); so Walter Scott was right—the Bible is the Book. It is really a library of sixty-six books in one; and, if we admit, as some do, that the Psalms consist of five books, this would give us seventy books in all. The number seventy occurs in two interesting incidents in the Old and New Testaments. Christ sent forth seventy disciples whose mission was to teach (Luke 10), and it was seventy elders whom God instructed Moses to appoint to govern Israel (Exodus 24). It is the multiple of seven and ten. Ten is the number of responsibility (*e.g.* the ten commandments), while seven is the number of

Divine completion. Assuming then our Bible has seventy books it is appropriate to say, in them we have a complete or perfect revelation of the mind of God for our instruction in the matter of our responsibility. Apart, however, from the number of books it contains, we know it to be in every sense all that we need.

The Bible is a unique book, and we shall now consider seven fundamental differences between it and any other book; the first of which is—its Inspiration. What do we mean by inspiration?

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16); thus the Divine record reads, and we do well to understand it in its sublime simplicity.

Our English verb “inspire” comes from the Latin word “inspiro” (in = in, or into, and spiro = to breathe). An explanation of this may be seen in 1 Chronicles 28:19. David the King of Israel is giving instructions to Solomon his son for the building of the temple, which project he himself hoped to execute, but was prohibited of God. He describes the vessels and metals, etc., to be used, and adds, “All this the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the work of the pattern.” David’s meaning is clear; his hand may have held the pen or instrument of writing, but a Divine hand held his while he traced the words God was breathing into his soul.

The Holy Scriptures are the writings of the sayings of God. This is proven from Romans 15:9, 10.

We read: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy: as it is written, 'For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy Name.' And again He saith, 'Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.'" Please note the word "again," which infers that that which was "written" is that which He "saith." What the Psalmist *wrote* is equal to what God *said*. This means that God and His written word are one. David learned that in a rather painful experience when he was rebuked by God's servant, Nathan, for his sin. God charged him with despising His "commandment," and followed this immediately by saying, "Thou hast despised Me" (2 Sam. 12:9, 10). We do well to remember that.

Of course inspiration is not claimed for every word of the translators; we readily admit they were not above erring, but we can certainly thank God for the way in which He has preserved for us the Scriptures in their original accuracy. For them we do unequivocally claim inspiration through the many translations down the years since the Septuagint Greek Version of the Old Testament in the third century B.C.

And here too it might be well to add how pleasing it is to find our Bible in circulation so free from printers' errors and other mistakes prevalent in books everywhere. We humbly record our thanks to those who have wrought so painstakingly to make this possible.

The importance and value of inspiration cannot be overstressed. We quote the words of another: "Verbal and direct inspiration is the Thermopylae of Biblical and scriptural truth." He writes: "No breath, no syllable; no syllable, no word; no word, no Book; no Book, no religion." (Dr. Bishop).

Sir Leslie Stephen also wrote: "There is no half-way house between the doctrine of verbal inspiration and a total abandonment of the Christian faith."

In that excellent Christian periodical "The Witness" (Pickering and Inglis) the late Editor, Hy. Pickering, outlined the inspiration of the Scriptures some years ago as follows: "*All* (the Scriptures) are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16); so are the *words* (2 Peter 3:2), and also the *letters* (Gal. 3:16—noticing the absence of the 's'). Even the *jot* (the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) and the *tittle* (the little ornamental mark in that alphabet distinguishing one letter from another) are inspired (Matthew 5:18). Of the writers themselves we read, they were 'borne along' (marg.) by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21)."

Referring to the writers as men inspired we must not conclude they were mere machines, and on this point I do well to quote Mr. S. Collett in his very helpful book, "Scripture of Truth." Writing of this, he says: "Let it, however, at once be said we do not believe that it (inspiration) partook of the nature of mechanical dictation. . . . It is perfectly clear

that the writers of whom anything at all is known, not only maintained, but strikingly betrayed, their own undoubted individuality. The stern character of Moses, the poetic nature of David, the love of John, etc., are all clearly stamped upon their particular writings."

It is true God once spoke through a donkey (Numbers 23:28), and when the fish that swallowed Jonah disgorged him onto dry ground again, it was simply obeying the voice of its Creator (Jonah 2:10). The unscrupulous prophet, Balaam, spake unwillingly the word of the Lord, and it was a godless Caiaphas who made that startling prophecy, "that Jesus should die for that (Jewish) nation" (John 11:51). But, be that as it may, the Scriptures registering truth and falsehoods, *e.g.*, Satan's lie (Genesis 3) and Cain's denial (Genesis 4), good deeds and bad, were penned by holy men—in many instances particularly adapted for the theme or subject about which they wrote—moving at the Divine impulse.

Before closing the subject I would like to add still another testimony—Mr. J. Hudson Taylor's. Writing on "Inspiration" he points out the importance of the letter "s" (Galatians 3:16) and adds: "Here, not merely one word, but even the number of the word—whether it is singular or plural—is the argument. . . . He, Paul, shows that the neuter plural—which is so very frequently used in a very comprehensive way—is not employed here." He

also comments on the "jot," and says: "It is the great letter of inflection. How do you form the Hebrew singular into the plural? Very often by that letter. How do you indicate certain grammatical inflections in a verb? By means of that letter. Then what Christ meant was that, not only every word, but every inflection of every word is inspired and unchangeable."

A few Sunday School children were gathered once in our home for a birthday celebration. They sang their favorite chorus:

The B-I-B-L-E,
Yes, that's the Book for me;
I stand alone on the Word of God,
The B-I-B-L-E.

Reaching across to the bookcase I selected a book and held it up before the children as I asked them, "Who wrote this book?" Immediately some of them chorused the name of the author, and continued naming the different authors of the different books I showed them. Finally, choosing a Bible I asked the same question. Rather awed, the children whispered, "God". How true the Saviour's words: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise" (Matt. 21:16).

Many volumes might be filled with illustrations of inspiration that could be adduced, but a few will suffice.

We think of the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible—written by Moses, and from these

shall make our selection. In the first chapter of the first book (Genesis) he gives us a perfectly reliable and scientific epitome of creation... From whence did he obtain such knowledge? Now we read that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7: 22), but the schools of Egypt did not furnish him with the unerring knowledge with which he wrote Genesis 1. He "went to school" with God in the desert, and this is the only satisfactory explanation of the Source of his knowledge, which *true* science has never repudiated.

Christians everywhere, never let us forget our precious Bible came to us from God. It is His written Word, while His only-begotten Son is the living Word; both are His wonderful gifts to men. May He help us to prize them highly.

Books and the Book

1 1 1

There are books in the making,
And books in the store:
There are books on the table,
And books on the floor.
The library and stock room
Have books piled up high;
There are more to be written,
And more I must buy.

Historical novels,
Biographies, too,
Each week brings a dozen
Exhausting Who's Who.
There is a fiction that's truthful,
And fiction that's trash;
There's an orderly volume,
And another—mere hash.

There's a new book of science,
And a book of the play,
There's a book of the year,
And the book of the day.
There are books to refer to,
And some to ignore,
There are books that will thrill you,
And others will bore.

There are poems of passion,
There is prose of distress,
There are lyrics and drama,
And sonnets' caress.

There are phrases to comfort,
And pages to cheer,
There are memories to charm you,
And forecasts to fear.

But the Book of the ages—
Of balance, of power—
Is the Book called the Bible,
The Book of the hour;
Exhaustless its treasure,
Eternal its store,
All the good of the others
You'll find here—and more.

—WILL H. HOUGHTON.

CHAPTER THREE

ITS COMPOSITION

1 1 1

Did ever any other book take so long to write as this Book?

We are told Noah Webster required thirty-six years to write his Dictionary, and Gibbons occupied twenty years of his time writing "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." God's Book is more important than the universe, for we read, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Exodus 20:11), but almost sixteen centuries elapsed between the first writer, Job, and the last penman, John; yet the Patriarch's writings remain equally new with the Seer's.

Among the writers (about forty) we find Kings (as David and Solomon), Statesmen (as Daniel and Nehemiah), Scholars (as Moses and Paul), Seers (as Isaiah and Jeremiah), Fishermen (as Peter and John), Joshua the warrior, Ezra the scribe, Ezekiel the captive, Amos the herdman, Matthew the taxgatherer, Paul the theologian and Luke the doctor.

And in what strange places was it written. Let us name a few: the wilderness of Sinai; the cliffs of Arabia; the hills and towns of Palestine; the courts of the temple; the schools of the prophets;

the palace of Shushan in Persia; by the river of Chebar in Babylon; the dungeons of Rome, and the little isle of Patmos in the blue Mediterranean.

Written at different periods, by different men, in different countries, with different points of view, there is a close similarity the whole way through the book without the individuality of the respective writers being destroyed.

It must be admitted that David in the beautiful twenty-second Psalm, alluding to the sufferings of the Messiah, makes mention of His death by crucifixion—a form of death, of which, as a Jew, he must have known nothing, it being the Roman mode of execution. On the other hand, the beloved physician Luke, whose Gospel contains more biological data of the Saviour's birth than any of the others, must have had a delightfully intelligent interest in many of the incidents his pen has traced for us. We might examine a few.

Himself a believer he readily accepted the miracle of the virgin birth, so with what holy appreciation must he have recorded the precious story; to him God entrusted the sacred privilege of penning the recital of that holy conception. One wonders what thoughts filled the physician's mind as he thought of the scene in yonder lowly stable in Bethlehem that starlight night so long ago when Christ the Lord was born. All three of the Synoptic Gospels contain the story of the poor leper who came to Jesus for cleansing, but Luke adds this word—

significant from a doctor's viewpoint—he was “full of leprosy” (ch. 5:12). Again, in the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment, we learn alone from Luke how desperate was her case; he says, “neither could she be healed of any” (physician) (chap. 8:43). He alone of the Evangelists in recounting the holy scene in the garden of Gethsemane makes reference to the phenomenon of the blood-like sweat. How he must have appreciated the intense physical sufferings of the Man of Sorrows in that lonely hour as he was constrained by the Spirit of God to write these words: “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (ch. 22:44).

Critics of the Word of God have vainly attempted to prove contradictions in the Bible; but, although it was written after a “staggering” fashion, even until this twentieth century none has come forward to substantiate his claim to repudiate what these men have written. Why is this?

It is true there were many writers, but all were guided by the same Divine Agency—God the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). There can be no contradictions. There may be *seeming* errors, but all will bear investigation. The Scriptures will perfectly harmonize when we distinguish the dispensations; or, to quote the Word of God itself, in reading it we must do so, “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Herein lies the secret of

its grand unity. Many men of God did the *writing*, but God Himself through His Spirit did all the *thinking*.

And that same Holy Spirit is the great Teacher Who indwells every true believer in Christ. Beloved Christian, do we truly appreciate this? Why do we remain in ignorance of the precious truths of our Bible when the Teacher is ever ready to take "the deep things of God" and reveal them unto us? (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). Remembering the Lord's own words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John 7:17), there is no excuse for ignorance.

CHAPTER FOUR

ITS INVINCIBILITY

1 1 1

No book has ever been hated with such a wholesale hatred; Why?

A visiting preacher to a boys' camp tells the following story. While he was in conversation with the Commandant one morning, a young boy came up to them to tearfully inform the Officer that he had lost his Bible. To the question if there was a name on the lost book the troubled lad replied, "Yes, sir, it had 'Holy Bible' on the cover!"

We smile at that, but think a moment; yes, indeed, it is a holy book, written by a holy God by the hand of holy men, that all who read it might be holy, and dwell forever in God's holy habitation. But, again our question—why do men hate the Bible?

The Lord Jesus enunciated a principle the youngest child knows to be true. In John 3, He said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (ver. 20).

The natural man hates the pure light of God's holy Word which shows him up in all the heinousness of his sin; and in his futile attempts to destroy the Book he wildly hopes to silence the witness of an accusing conscience. It is suggestive that those who have been foremost in seeking the

destruction of God's Word have been men whose moral influence has not been felt for good.

The enemies of the Book may be broadly classed into two groups: (1) Those who hate it for what it is—the infallible Word of God, and (2) Those who reject certain portions of it—incomprehensible to them—which they regard as insulting their intellect. Both groups would rob us of our sacred heritage in the precious Scriptures.

Men like Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll belong to the first group, and must be regarded as avowed antagonists of both God and His Word. They could gladly have joined hands with the men of Smithfield, London, who flung to the flames every available copy of the Bible they were able to lay their hands upon. What bonfires! Yea, and what retribution must have been meted out to those sin-benighted men who dared to take from the common man the rich inheritance God had so graciously given him.

The Bible has a story of a man who made a bonfire of its sacred pages once: it is told for us in Jeremiah 36, and I briefly sketch it for you. The prophet instructs Baruch his friend to take dictation of the Word of the Lord as it came to Jeremiah. It was a summary of the judgments of God against the nation of Israel over a period of years. All is faithfully recorded by Baruch, who, shortly after is commanded to appear before the godless princes; and to them he gives a recital of the con-

tents of the roll or book. Upon hearing the solemn message the princes confiscate the roll, and bring the matter to the attention of the equally godless king Jehoiakim. As the king listens to the impending doom he is incensed, and without waiting to hear all the contents of the roll cuts it in pieces, casting it to the flames of a fire burning before him. God instructs His servant to rewrite the message which now includes a dire denunciation of the wicked king; this is dreadful in the extreme. Of him, He says, "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (ver. 30). Elsewhere He said, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (ch. 22: 19). History records that he was killed by Nebuchadnezzar, who had taken him prisoner, and his body cast into a common sewer. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10: 31). Poor Jehoiakim must surely serve as a buoy, warning all travellers across the sea of life not to trifle with God or His holy Word.

This other class, while they do not profess open enmity against God or His Word, must be regarded as opponents by all who love the inspired writings. The danger from them is of a more subtle character, for many of them are professed exponents of the Book, but deny its precious and vitally important truths. Their argument is an old one: "Ex-

cept I can see I will not believe." On the contrary, those who believe what God has written say, "We believe and now we see." And after all that is pure logic. May I illustrate?

It was Spurgeon who told of some young worldly-wise men setting out on a tour, who agreed that they would not believe what they could not reason. Chancing upon a farmer in their travels they told him of their decision. Smilingly he directed their gaze to a field where were some cows, sheep, pigs and geese contentedly eating the grass. Asking the men to note that all were enjoying the same grass he enquired, "Can you explain how with one it produces hide, with another wool, with another bristles, and still with a fourth feathers?" The sequel to the story is obvious; of course they believed what they failed to reason.

These opponents are commonly called "modernists." But are they so very modern after all? The very first man born into the world was the pioneer of modernism. He rejected the revelation of God, and dared to approach Him on the grounds of his own reasoning. To follow his path is to come under the "woe" of God (Jude 11). Our "modernists" will agree with us on many points of Scripture, but on the vital principles of our Christian faith they have turned aside from the inspired writings to the plausible, vaporous reasonings of a faulty speculation.

But all in vain; the old Book stands, described by W. E. Gladstone, Premier of Great Britain dur-

ing the Victorian era, as "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." Proudly stands Gibraltar's Rock, unmoved and undaunted, although its base has been washed by the seas for millenniums. What a metaphor of the Word of God!

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). This in substance is the language used of the Eternal Son of God (Psalm 102:26, 27). Shall Christ abide? So shall His Word.

Cease, ye prattling critics, and repent, ye enemies of righteousness. "Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

"Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

The Anvil of God's Word

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had" said I,
To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "the Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers GONE."

—R. C. C.

CHAPTER FIVE

ITS CIRCULATION

1 1 1

Many readers likely know that John Wycliffe gave the world the first English Bible in the year 1384. The English Reformer, as he was called, sailed through troublous seas to give the common people the Word of God; and it is distasteful to write that he died hated by churchmen who did not hesitate to vituperate this brave and noble soul. Wycliffe expected to die a violent death, but peacefully enough he passed away on the last day of the year he finished his translation. However, his remains were not allowed to lie in undisturbed repose; forty years later they were ordered exhumed to be burned, and the ashes cast into the river Swift which flows by the little parish of Lutterworth where the great Reformer so faithfully preached the Word he loved. Of this dastardly deed R. Paterson Smyth has this to say: "As the Swift bare them into the Severn, and the Severn into the narrow seas, and they again into the ocean, thus the ashes of Wycliffe is an emblem of his teaching, which is now dispersed over all the world" (How We Got Our Bible). How true!

The growth of its circulation is phenomenal.

Voltaire, the French infidel, remarked on one occasion that he would destroy the religion of Jesus and stop people from reading the Bible. He actually bought a press for the purpose of printing tracts against the Book. Singularly enough, the very printing-press used by the wretched man later fell into the hands of Bible lovers, and was used by them to print the very Bible he hated and so despised.

The languages and dialects in which the Word of God is now printed number well over one thousand. What other book has been printed like that? It is reported that, if the Bible were taken from the market ninety per cent of printing presses would remain idle.

The largest and most informative catalog in the world is the famous Sears Roebuck. What American does not know that name? I read some time ago that it ranks second to the Bible in books to be found in U. S. homes. But then, there are millions of people living in this world who have never heard that there is such a catalog as the Sears Roebuck.

In every continent, in every country, and, one might safely say, in every province or state of every country a copy of the Word of God will be found. And the day is coming when there shall not be a village nor a hamlet, whether in the mountainous regions of India, the bleak steppes of Siberia, or the jungle recesses of Africa without their inhabitants

having the knowledge of God. It is written: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

Bible lovers everywhere have reason to thank God for the memory of William Tyndale, the dauntless pioneer of English Bible fame, who spent his life to circulate the sacred Scriptures. He was born in 1484 (one hundred years after the death of Wycliffe). As a young man he made the famous statement, ". . . if God spares me I will one day make the boy who drives the plow to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope does." To fulfil that decision became the goal of his life.

I recall in earlier days preaching with an Irishman, who loved when relating his conversion to declare, "I was saved in the handles of the plow." That man loved the Bible and loved to preach it to the blessing of many. I'm not afraid to say that in his case Tyndale's ambition is realized.

Tyndale and his Bible were hated by the hierarchy of the church of his day. Thousands of his copies of the Scriptures were seized as they were carried into England from Germany where they were printed. At the old Cross of St. Paul's, London, they were fed to the flames as "a burnt-offering most pleasing to Almighty God." But, in spite of the opposition, like the children of Israel under Pharaoh's tyranny—of whom we read, "The more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. 1:12)—so did God's precious Word

increase. And Satan helped the good work along! It was this way:

The Bishop of London, prime mover in the unholy campaign to destroy the Bible, sought the aid of a merchant trading to the continent — one Augustine Pakington — to secure copies of the Scriptures by purchase, hoping thereby to secure possession of all the books. Unfortunately for the Bishop, this merchant was a secret friend of Tyndale's; so, seeking the translator, whose funds he knew to be at a low ebb, he propounded the suggestion that he sell his books through him to the London dignitary. At first Tyndale was amazed that Pakington would ask such a thing of him, but upon the latter's explaining that the Bishop would burn the books anyway, and it would be best for the translator to have funds to imprint others to replace them, the bargain was made.

And so, "The Bishop had the books, Pakington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money." With his replenished funds the translator went to work on a better New Testament, so that they came "thick and threefold into England."

On Friday 6th, October 1536, the doughty champion of the Book was strangled and burnt to ashes at the stake. With his last breath he prayed, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." And that prayer God marvellously answered.

Three years later an English Bible is found in every parish church, whose frontispiece depicts

King Henry VIII kneeling bareheaded before God, saying, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet." (Here let me interject, It is too bad he didn't mean that).

But the dawn of the nineteenth century finds the precious Word of God still out of the reach of the poor man in the street throughout England, and particularly in Wales. That brings me to tell you a little of the birth of The British and Foreign Bible Society, which under God, owes its beginning to "Mary Jones and her Bible." A word about Mary may not be out of place.

One bright spring morning in the year 1800 Mary Jones might have been observed leaving her home in the little Welsh village of Llanfihangel with her face in the direction of Bala, twenty-five miles distant, where she hoped to purchase the much-coveted Bible. Over her shoulder is slung a borrowed wallet in which she intends to carry home her treasure. Just now it contains her shoes; the poor girl has only one pair, and she well knows the toll a twenty-five-mile trek will demand of them. As she nears her destination she will wear them. Yes, she is walking every mile of a fifty-mile round trip. Why? Since her earliest childhood she has longed for a Bible to call her own. Six years previous she commenced to save, and every copper earned (coppers were precious in those days) she carefully added to her little hoard. Today she has the required sum, but can she get a Bible? We continue with her.

In Bala lives a Mr. Charles who distributes a scant supply to those fortunate few who can attain to the price. It is he whom Mary now seeks.

As the shades of evening fall that day our heroine arrives in Bala only to discover it is too late to see Mr. Charles; so gratefully accepts the hospitality of a local preacher called Edwards. In the morning he accompanies her to the home of the Bible distributor. His heart-strings are tugged violently as he listens to this brave teen-age girl tell the story of her desire for a Bible. He is amazed at her store of Bible passages committed to memory from a neighbor's Bible, and no less amazed to know she has undertaken a two-day walk to obtain one for herself. But he must disappoint her; his consignment of Bibles is already sold, except for a few copies reserved for friends. When Mary learns that her walk is in vain, it is too much for the poor child; she is overcome with grief and disappointment, and dropping into the nearest seat she buries her head in her hands while she weeps big, hot tears. This is too much for the silent men standing by, and they too are overcome. What a scene!

"My dear child, I see you *must* have a Bible, difficult as it is for me to spare you one. It is impossible, simply impossible, to refuse you," was the only reply Mr. Charles could make. Going to a cupboard he takes down a copy of the sacred volume, and places it in the hands of the now-delighted girl. If the satchel carried shoes on the outward trip,

slung across Mary's back, now bearing her beloved Bible she hugs it to her bosom as she wends her way homeward.

This simple, but heart-stirring incident gave fresh impetus to Mr. Charles in his endeavors to place the Bible in the hands of his fellow-men, and gave birth to the thought in his mind of a Society, whose sole object would be the publication and distribution of the Word of God. In 1802 he visited London, where before some friends of a Tract Society he related the story of Mary Jones and told of his desire. His visit was fruitful, and two years later the British and Foreign Bible Society was established. Today its presses are turning out thousands of copies of the grand old Book in every language.

Salvation! O Salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation,
Has heard Messiah's Name.

CHAPTER SIX

ITS INFLUENCE

1 1 1

As I write the heading for this chapter I feel I should apologize to you, dear reader, for essaying to tell you of the influence of the Bible in the lives of men and women in a short chapter like this; but, on the other hand, if I refrain from saying a little of what the grand old Book has done and is doing, you might well be critical. I will call my chapter a "crumb" from the Bible granary, assuring you "there is bread enough and to spare."

The world without the Bible—what a calamity! Almost everywhere we look we see unmistakable evidences of its weighty influence. Back of the hospitals and asylums, the homes of refuge and orphanages, the church buildings and halls where God's Name is honored, and the happy family circle, I see a Bible.

It testifies to its own influence. In Psalm 119 the Psalmist asks the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and immediately answers, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (v. 9). What is good advice for "a young man" is good advice for everyone. We can safely say that, if everyone of earth's reputed population of nearly two billions heeded the Divine advice we

could say "good-bye" to gaols and gallows, penitentiaries and policemen, liquor and lewdness, bolts and bars. That in itself is a commentary upon the Bible's salutary effects.

How striking to notice in the case of juvenile delinquency reported daily the number of youthful offenders who come from homes where there is no recognition of God's precious Word, and who never frequent a Sunday School. There may be exceptions to this, but the exception proves the rule.

Or, shall we think of the criminals who languish in our prisons everywhere? It would be interesting to survey them and discover how many among them are really acquainted with a Bible. I'm sure the policeman, the gaoler, the attorney and the judge will agree with us—sin and the Book are not found hand-in-hand. One of the Wardens of our city Reformatories has this to say: "During many years in penal work I have looked in vain for an inmate who even knew enough about God's Word to be able to recite John 3:16."

But there is another aspect to the influence of the Bible. Our same Psalmist declares, "Great peace have they that love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165). What myriads of witnesses could rise up since God first put His truth in man's hand and gladly acquiesce. We think of Dwight Lyman Moody who preached its message with such blessing, and in his biographies learn

something of the influence of the Bible upon that life of his.

When Moody was but a child his father was tragically taken away, and the widow was left with seven children; a month later twin babies were born into the desolate family. One can easily imagine the distress and anxiety which must have surged in the poor widow's bosom at times, but her trust and confidence were in God; and from the pages of His blessed Book she drew great comfort. One night as she opened it her eye fell upon the passage in Jeremiah 49:11. She read, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive: and let thy widows trust in Me." She took God at His word, and that old Bible bears traces of the trembling hand as it pencilled the page. "Oh, God," she sobbed, "I know that Thou hast given these children to me, and that Thou wilt be a Father to them if I will do a mother's part." How much her Bible meant to her! And God did fulfil His promise. At the age of 90 years she passed into His presence, and her remains were reverently laid beside those of her husband. The stone that marks the spot in that little New England cemetery is engraved with the precious verse.

The great evangelist was with his saintly Mother at the last. Standing by her bedside he picked up her Bible, and remarked, ". . . Everything came from it."

If this world had more God-fearing and Bible-honoring women like Betsy Moody there would be more Dwight Lyman Moodys to go forth and preach its glad message, leaving an influence behind them for all eternity.

Came a day when the mighty soul-winner laid down the Sword. Comments on that life and work flowed from all sources, with one newspaper journalist reporting, "Moody depopulated hell by a million souls." Moody's influence was but a reflection of that of his godly Mother; and the source of hers? You've guessed it—the Bible.

While Moody was reaping his sheaves in Europe and America that dauntless pioneer missionary, David Livingstone, was blazing trails with the gospel message in dark Africa. After being lost for years to the civilized world, that famous explorer, H. M. Stanley, found him in the bush. Let us listen to the testimony of that intrepid warrior of the Cross as to his years of self-imposed exile to make Christ known among the poor natives. Psalm 37 was precious to him, and verse 5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass," became his favourite text. "Shall I tell you," he said, "what sustained me in my exiled life among strangers whose language I could not understand? It was this that comforted me at all times, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'" He remarked on this text, that, "It is the word of a Gentleman of strict and sacred honor:

so there's an end of it." Certainly, the Bible molded that fragrant and useful life.

In that thrilling saga of the sea, "The Mutiny of the Bounty," there is a delightful aftermath of the heartless incident of the sailors' insubordination and cruelty to Captain Bligh and his handful of faithful men, whom they forced into a small boat, and cast adrift upon the ocean. In due time, however, after many hair-raising battles with the elements, they reached the shores of their native England. But, what of the mutineers? My story, in which the Bible plays an important part, is of them.

They sailed to an island, known as Pitcairn Island, in the south Pacific, where they took them native women and settled down to life with them. In due time an English colony was founded. About 19 years after the mutiny an American schooner touched at the island, which was supposedly uninhabited, and discovered the colony, all of whom claimed to be descendants of the survivors of the Bounty. Later, in 1814, a British man-of-war called, and forty-six descendants were counted. To the amazement of the visitors the entire colony was christianized, and all were found to be living in perfect harmony and happiness. They not only professed, but understood the precepts and principles of the Christian religion. Marriage had been instituted, and all debauchery and immoral conduct had ceased. What was the secret?

Two of the mutineers, Smith and Young, had brought from the *Bounty* a copy of the Scriptures, which, in their spare time (and they had plenty) they must have read. The result of this may be safely conjectured: they repented of their misdeeds and turned to God. They then instructed the natives in the truths of the Book, the acceptance of which produced the marvellous change already described.

And we might continue *ad inf.*: but, surely enough has been written.

Reader, if you are a Christian, study the Book, and practise what you know; you will reap rich dividends in its influence for power and peace upon your soul. If you are not a Christian, bow to its claims upon you as a sinner, and experience the emancipating power of the Saviour it proclaims to save you and keep you. Life for you will then begin.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ITS ADAPTABILITY

‘ ‘ ‘

“Is the Bible out of date?” As I write this chapter I have before me a letter from a preacher-friend of mine, in which he states he has to answer this question at a meeting. Pondering it, I found myself asking, “Is the springtime out of date?” “Has the sun been rivalled yet?” “Have artists improved upon the colors of the rainbow?” Well, when we can add freshness to the springtime, brightness to the sun, and beauty to the rainbow it will then be time to look for a book to supersede our Bible. A school-boy would say, “Oh, yeah!”

It is true we admit that God did not give us His Book that we might be instructed in modern science and learning, but all it has to say of science relative to its teaching of the revelation of God has never been scientifically unfounded, nor genuinely proven incorrect.

We shall think of some of its references which fringe on science, and think first of all of blood.

Previous to 1629 it was thought that air was the main factor of life. In that year Sir Wm. Harvey discovered that the blood circulates through the

body, and contains the life principle. God in His Book told us that 1500 years before the birth of Christ. Moses wrote: "And the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). If Sir Wm. Harvey could have met Moses he might have learned a lot of wonderful things about the blood.

Blood is an interesting subject, if you will permit a layman's referring to it, and the great benefits obtained from the proper use of it are today invaluable, as everyone must know. We speak freely of Blood donors, Blood banks, Blood plasma and Blood transfusions. The Bible is full of it; its scarlet line runs through its pages from Genesis to Revelation. We see it spilling in Eden and splashing on Jewish altars; it streams from Calvary's Cross on into eternity, so that we hear the redeemed in glory sing its worth as they bow before the Lamb from Whose veins the crimson tide was poured.

Science in recent years made a startling discovery; it now reveals that blood is no longer distinguished by one's nationality, color, sex nor birth; but, instead, is recognized by its types. Once more let us thumb the pages of this grand old Book.

In his marvellous sermon preached in Mars Hill, Athens, in the first century of Christianity, the Apostle Paul declared to the clever philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics, "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all

the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Science required a long, long time to learn that.

Before leaving the subject of blood permit me to make another reference.

The late Dr. H. A. Cameron of Detroit wrote a little tract sometime ago, with a touching reference to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Of the piercing of the Saviour's side at the Cross, he has this to say: "From the wound (so large that Thomas could have thrust his hand into it) 'came there out blood and water'. This wonderful sight awakened surprise and deep interest in John, and may surely engage our attention also, namely, the water that flowed from the pericardium and the blood that flowed from the heart. The pericardium is a closed sac encasing the heart and lubricated by a small amount of fluid (about a teaspoonful) to facilitate the motion of the heart." Dr. Cameron points out that the question might be raised as to how John could notice such a small amount of water mingled with the blood as it poured from the wounded side. I have read that skeptics delighted in this poser years ago. "In answer," says the writer, "let me quote a significant statement from a standard work (Mallory and Wright's *Pathological Technique*): 'The normal amount (of the pericardial fluid) is about a teaspoonful, but it may be increased to 100 c. c. (24 teaspoonfuls) where the death agony is prolonged'." So John was right, and medical science must bow to him.

How correct is the Bible in its reference to the science of the stars?

Job is one of the oldest men in the Bible, but he could talk intelligently with 20th Century astronomers. In answering Bildad notice the ease with which he refers to the planets as the creation of God: "Who," he says, "maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south" (Job 9:9). So intelligent in the subject is he, God can discuss the planets in their orbits as He converses with him. That Job may learn, however, how very insignificant he is in the presence of Omnipotence the Lord asks, "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" It is said that the ancients were at a loss to understand why the Lord should single out Arcturus for special guidance, since they believed it was a "fixed" planet. But, as time rolls along and God imparts to men the knowledge wherewith to build larger and better telescopes so that they may study His heavens, they make fresh discoveries. Somewhere I read that modern astronomers now believe it to be the fastest moving of all the greater known bodies to the ancients—"One single component of its velocity (its speed in the direction of this earth) being above 200 miles per second." According to Seiss ("The Gospel in the Stars"), "nearly all the best commentators, Jewish and Christian, take this constellation as denoting the North Polar constellation, now known under the name of Ursa Major, the Great Bear."

In the same chapter God asks another question of Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" (v. 31). This also puzzled the stargazers of long ago, but not our astronomer of to-day. One writer has this to say, "The center of gravity of the entire sidereal system must be situated near the Pleiades." Seiss adds: "Of this constellation, Maedler, in modern times, from observations of the motions of the so-called 'fixed stars' has pointed out the center of this group (Alcyone) as the great central sun of the universe, around which all others revolve." Influences, indeed!

An interesting reference is made by a Psalmist in the 89th Psalm to the heavenly bodies. Writing of God's ancient people, Israel, and of their establishing by God, he says of the throne of David, "It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven" (v. 37). Now, we ask, what is a "witness"? The word simply means "to tell what we see or know." This certainly Israel was; and even in this, the day of their dispersion, they are a solemn witness to the truth of God's Word and His inflexible judgment! But, of what, and to whom does the moon "witness"? Men for a long time considered the moon as a body of light in itself as is the sun. Of course not today. We all know it is a mammoth reflector of the great light of the day; and as it sheds its beautiful silvery beams across the darkened part of the earth it silently "witnesses" to this sphere's nocturnal inhabitants the sun is shin-

ing elsewhere, and there it is day. What a "witness"! Well might we say with the Psalmist in this verse—Selah!

Since the Bible is God's word to man it must be as perfect and unchangeable as Himself, adaptable for all seasons, times and ages.

It is extremely difficult to select a portion of the sacred Word above others to prove how adaptable it is, but we might for a few minutes think of the twenty-third Psalm—perhaps in the consensus of Christians everywhere, "The Pearl of Psalms"—as a sample of how precious God's Word has been since He first placed it in the hands of His creatures.

David wrote it; the Bible says so, but I think most of us would have guessed that anyway. When the book of records is opened I expect to find that thousands of saints made that Psalm a dying pillow. Children have lisped it at their Mother's knee; strong men have quietly but firmly repeated it to themselves when cast into the throes of a bloody conflict; the tottering Christian leaning on his staff for very age delights to listen to its tender message of comfort and strength. Children in Sunday School have gladly earned from their teacher a penny, a stick of candy, a motto, and what not, for careful repetition; and perhaps more sermons have been preached from it than from anything ever written. Again and again have we walked through its garden to pluck the delightful flowers that grow in profusion there. When the poems of Longfellow, Tennyson and Burns

are forgotten this grand lyric of the Sweet Psalmist of Israel shall be sung and spoken while human lips continue framing speech.

A Scottish shepherd lay dying in the Highlands, and although a Christian for many years was disturbed as he thought of death. He sent for his pastor, who, seating himself by the bedside of the dying man of the heather, quietly began reading this lovely psalm, "Donald," said the pastor, "do you know the twenty-third Psalm?" The question stirred the shepherd to retort, "Do I ken the twenty-third Psalm? I kent it lang afore ye was born, and many's the time have I said it to myself when alone with the sheep." "Well then, listen while I read," replied the pastor; and he slowly and decisively read the words: 'Yea, though I walk though the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me!' "Donald," enquired his guide, "are you afraid of a shadow?" This roused some of the Highland pride in the dear old man, and he fairly snorted, "Ah'm no afeered o'a shadow; you never saw a Cameron that was." "You are in the 'shadows' now," quietly responded the man by his side. "Oh! I see it now," was the glad exclamation of the dying saint, "Death's only a 'shadow' and Ah'm no aferred o' that." His was a peaceful end, the end of many before him, and the end of many since. And as adaptable as the twenty-third Psalm so is the whole

of the Book to fulfil the purpose for which it was written.

“I go on forever” says the song of the babbling brook, and that, we might say, is the music of our Bible. Ever since the brook began its flowing, man and beast have been refreshed there, and still the brook flows on. It refreshes thirsty souls today equally as well as it ever did, and while it flows it always will. And so with our Bible. Of the gospel a well-known stanza runs:

Grace is flowing like a river,
Millions there have been supplied;
Still it flows as fresh as ever
From a Saviour's wounded side.

Those lines epitomize the adaptability of the Bible.

My Old Bible

1 1 1

Though' the cover is worn,
And the pages are torn,
And though places bear traces of tears,
Yet more precious than gold
Is this Book worn and old,
That can shatter and scatter my fears.

This old Book is my guide,
'Tis a friend by my side,
It will lighten and brighten my way;
And each promise I find
Soothes and gladdens the mind,
As I read it and heed it each day.

To this Book I will cling,
Of its worth I will sing,
Though great losses and crosses be mine;
For I cannot despair,
Though surrounded by care,
While possessing this blessing divine.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ITS MESSAGE

Why was the Book written? We come now to consider the important reason for its being placed in the hand of man. Some read it but fail altogether to see God's purpose in giving it to us. They remind me of a little boy who, in company with his parents and a preacher, was shown over a large battleship lying in a harbor. One of the officers was a Christian and a friend of the family, so was happy to have the pleasure of showing them many interesting things aboard the battle-wagon. Over two hours were spent in the tour, but at last it was over, and the party returned home. The preacher enquired of the little fellow, "What was the most interesting thing that you saw on the ship?" To his astonishment came the quick reply, "I saw a black kitty." (It was the ship's mascot!). Friend, be sure you get from God's Book what He has there for you.

The Bible has *poetry*; so much so that poets, whose names are household names, have sought its pages for inspiration. In glancing through the works of Byron I see such titles as: "Vision of Belshazzar"; "By the Rivers of Babylon"; "Jephthah's Daughter", and, ironically enough when we consider the end of the misspent life of this profligate peer, "All is

Vanity, saith the Preacher." Need we ask from whence these titles come? Yes, poets have found the Bible a veritable mine, but poetry is not its theme.

History is interwoven all through its pages. We read of Pharaohs, Kings and Cæsars; the rise and fall of empires are recorded; the changing of dynasties chronicled, but only as the fortunes of men and nations mingled with those of His people as a nation or His servants as individuals, as Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Paul and Christ Himself. One example will suffice: No Roman governor of Palestine is as well-known as Pilate. Why? His path crossed with that of our Lord Jesus. No, history is not the theme of the Bible.

Love is there. What beautiful stories are the romances of Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob and Rachel; Boaz and Ruth! But these were not written as an end in themselves, but as a means to an end—the contemplation of the sweetest love story that ever was written. It is couched for us in one remarkable verse, perhaps better known than any other Bible verse, John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But I must not anticipate.

Science? Already we have made references in these pages to this subject in the Bible. What perfect science it teaches. The first chapter of the Book stands alone—a veritable Mount Everest—in

this field of learning. How beautifully sublime it remains as we contrast it with the foolish theories of a crazed philosophy. But the Word of God is not a text-book on science; He has told us as much as we need to know to appreciate His true purpose in giving us the Book.

And what of *Drama*? We need not leave Genesis; it is pregnant with scenes which tug all our heart-strings. What pathos is packed into those tense, silent moments as the aged Abraham binds his only son to the rude altar on Mount Moriah; then laying a firm hand upon that cruelly-bladed knife he prepares to plunge it into the bared bosom of him who is dearer to him than life itself. But at the crucial moment that hand is stayed by the voice of God from heaven, and reading it for the first time the reader sighs with relief. (Chapter 22).

Or, shall we think of that scene in the palatial residence of Egypt's Premier, Joseph the Hebrew? Before the once-despised but now exalted prince in private audience stand those ten men, his estranged brothers, who for twenty pieces of silver twenty-two years before had sold him to strangers as a slave. Actually they were half-brothers, but Benjamin is with them; Benjamin was born of Rachel—the only child beside Joseph that she bore to Jacob; and in bearing him she gave her life. When Joseph last saw Benjamin he was a mere child. What a flood of emotions swept the soul of that man, second to none in all that great land of Egypt

except the mighty Pharaoh himself. The men before him are totally unaware of his identity, but he recognized them from the first interview. After a strange proposal to them that he keep Benjamin he listens to a touching plea by Judah in behalf of the aged father at home that Benjamin be allowed to return home, while he, Judah, will gladly take his place to be a bondman to Joseph. This is too much for the big-hearted prince, and "he wept aloud." With electrifying suddenness he then declares, "I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt." He then explains everything, after which he falls on Benjamin's neck; and with Benjamin on his neck the long-lost brothers weep it out. What drama! The world of literature has not its parallel. But drama is not the theme of our Book, although these dramatic scenes help us to a better understanding of God's dealings with poor, fallen man.

Benjamin Franklin, the American statesman, seems to have had some appreciation of the Bible, although possibly from a mere literary standpoint. While representing his country in France he freely expressed that appreciation in the social circle in which he moved. They scorned the Book, so Franklin hit upon the novel idea of engaging a well-known elocutionist to come to a party he gave to his friends; and read a chosen portion. He selected the little book of Ruth for the occasion, but changed the names of the characters in the beautiful pas-

toral story, and camouflaged its Biblical background. The company were silent while the elocutionist regaled them with the delightful romance, but as soon as the story was ended immediately demanded of Franklin to tell them where he obtained such choice literature. The American's moment of triumph had come; "That, gentlemen," said he, "is from the Bible you despise so much."

No vocabulary was ever written with adequate adjectives to describe the Book we love so well; but, still we have not yet answered our question: "Why was it written?" Let it speak for itself.

One day many years ago—to be exact it was the day Christ left the tomb—a wearied man and his companion (his wife?) might have been seen wending their lonely way back home to the little village of Emmaus, about eight miles distant from Jerusalem. The past few days in the Metropolis had been filled with sorrow. He, Whom they loved and followed, had been cruelly nailed to a Roman cross of shame. Sorrowfully they now retrace their steps homeward while strange thoughts fill their minds. Rumours were flying that that very day He Whom they had seen crucified and laid in the quiet little tomb in Joseph's garden sepulchre had risen from the dead; actually, some of the little band of disciples declared they had seen Him. One thing was certain—His tomb was empty, but where was He? They were confused as they discussed these things. In the midst of their cogitations a Stranger over-

took them, Who, glancing at their doleful countenances enquired the reason for their sadness. Patiently He listened while they recounted all, and then upbraided them for their tardiness in believing the Old Testament writings, with which they were familiar. This was followed with the grandest Bible reading or exposition mortal man has ever experienced. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets," we read, "He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Do I need to tell you Who the Expositor was? It was "Himself" around Whom all Scripture gathers, and to Whom all Scripture directs.

Some years ago one stormy night I sat in the lounge of an ocean-going steamer as it battled Atlantic gales. With me was another servant of Christ. Before us on the table lay a box of colored pieces of cardboard, which the steward had offered to us. It was a puzzle, and he suggested we might put it together. This we did to discover that we had now on the table a picture of the bust of Abraham Lincoln. Every piece had its proper place, and when it was fitted there with its adjoining piece, together they formed a perfectly composite picture.

So with the Scriptures: We have types and shadows of Christ in the Pentateuch, and startling predictions concerning Him in the Prophecies. The Messianic Psalms reveal His feelings, while in the Historical books one figure after another rises up before us to portray Him. In the Gospels we have

repeated for us the story of His life and death, the blessed sequel of which is seen in the Epistles. The last book of all, the Revelation, unfolds before our gaze the grand consummation of God's purposes, plans and projects in which Christ is the central Figure.

Everything in the Book is related to Him. In Genesis we have the story of creation, and we see a stage prepared for the great drama of Calvary; there God "made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53: 6). The Book abounds with references to heaven, but heaven can only be heaven because Christ is there; contrariwise, hell is what it is because the blessing and salvation of His presence are not there. Man is seen in the sacred page in all his filth and sin, wickedness and guilt through alienation from Christ, while the beauty and honor in the lives of others exist because of union with Him. And the heinousness of sin itself becomes a dark background to but enhance the silvery hue of His grace and great redemptive work. Christ is all and in all.

One may well question what our occupation in the glory will be. Perhaps no better answer could be given than—occupation with Himself. As Christ the Living Word is perfect, so is His written Word. All that we can ever know of Him is contained in its pages, but eternity could not exhaust the treasures there of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Can we be better occupied e'en now than

learning more of the message God has given us of His blessed Son in this blessed volume we call the Bible? It is precious to my soul to know that the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writers is our Teacher. His vocation is to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us. May we all who belong to Him echo the words of the Apostle Paul—who gave us about one third of the Book—"That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:10). This for him was life's greatest ambition.

If, perchance, dear reader, you are not acquainted with the Author, I ask you not to lay the Book down until you can say, "I am His: and He is mine."

A Romish priest remonstrated with an Irish peasant for daring to read the Scriptures. "What warrant," asked he, "have you to read the Book for yourself?" The rustic was equal to the occasion, and gave a characteristic reply, "Faith, and if it plaze your riverence I have a 'sarch' warrant; for sure, and didn't the blessed Master say, 'Search the scriptures' " (John 5:39).

Yes, my friend, God gave us the Book that we might read it, and learn His will. Take the peasant's advice, and "sarch" the Scriptures.

The Word of God

‘ ‘ ‘

This Book unfolds Jehovah's mind:
This Voice invites in accents kind.
This Fountain has its source on high:
This Friend will all your need supply.
This Mine affords us boundless wealth:
This Good Physician gives us health.
This Sun renews and warms the soul:
This Sword both wounds and makes us whole.
This Letter shows our sins forgiven:
This Guide conducts us safe to heaven.
This Charter has been sealed with blood:
This Volume is the Word of God.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

CHAPTER NINE

A DIARY

‘ ‘ ‘

January 15—Been resting quietly for a week. The first few nights after the first of this year my owner read me regularly, but he has forgotten me, I guess.

February 2—Clean up. I was dusted with other things and put back in my place.

February 8—Owner used me for a short time after dinner looking up a few references. Went to Sunday School.

March 7—Clean up. Dusted and in my old place again. Have been down in the lower hall since my trip to Sunday School.

April 2—Busy day. Owner led League meeting, and had to look up references. He had an awful time finding one though it was right there in its place all the time.

May 5—In Grandma's lap all afternoon. She is here on a visit. She let a teardrop fall on Colossians 2: 5-7.

May 6—In Grandma's lap again this afternoon. She spent most of her time on 1 Corinthians 13 and the last four verses of the 15th chapter.

May 7, 8, 9—In Grandma's lap every afternoon now. It's a comfortable spot. Sometimes she reads me, and sometimes she talks to me.

May 10—Grandma gone. Back in the old place.
She kissed me goodbye.

June 3—Had a couple of fourleafed clovers stuck
in me today.

July 1—Packed in a trunk with clothes and other
things. Off on a vacation, I guess.

July 7—Still in the trunk.

July 10—Still in trunk, though nearly everything
else has been taken out.

July 15—Home again, and in my old place. Quite a
journey, though I do not see why I went.

August 1—Rather stuffy and hot. Have two maga-
zines, a novel and an old hat on top of me.
Wish they would take them off.

September 5—Clean up. Dusted and set right again.

September 10—Used by Mary a few moments today.
She was writing a letter to a friend whose
brother had died, and wanted an appropriate
verse.

September 30—Clean up again.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

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