

THE BIBLE NO. 15

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MARCH 18, 1855,
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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

“I have written to him the great things of My Law, but they were counted as a strange thing.”
Hosea 8:12

This is God’s complaint against Ephraim. It is no mean proof of His goodness, that He stoops to rebuke His erring creatures. It is a great argument of His gracious disposition that He bows His head to notice terrestrial affairs. He might, if He pleased, wrap Himself with night as with a garment. He might put the stars around His wrist for bracelets and bind the suns around His brow for a coronet. He might dwell alone, far, far above this world, up in the seventh Heaven and look down with calm and silent indifference upon all the doings of His creatures. He might do as the heathens supposed their Jove did, sit in perpetual silence, sometimes nodding his awful head to make the Fates move as he pleased.

But Jove never thought of the little things of earth, disposing of them as beneath his notice, engrossed within his own being, swallowed up within himself. He lived alone and retired. And I, as one of Jove’s creatures might stand by night upon a mountaintop and look upon the silent stars and say, “you are the eyes of god, but you look not down on me. Your light is the gift of his omnipotence, but your rays are not smiles of love to me. God, the mighty creator, has forgotten me, I am a despicable drop in the ocean of creation, a sear leaf in the forest of beings, an atom in the mountain of existence. He knows me not. I am alone, alone, alone.”

But it is not so, Beloved. *Our* God is of another order. He notices every one of us. There is not a sparrow or a worm but is found in His decrees. There is not a person upon whom His eye is not fixed. Our most secret acts are known to Him. Whatsoever we do, or bear, or suffer, the eye of God still rests upon us and we are beneath His smile—for we are His people. Or beneath His frown—for we have erred from Him.

Oh, how ten-thousand-fold merciful is God, that, looking down upon the race of man, He does not smile it out of existence. We see from our text that God looks upon man for He says of Ephraim, “I have written to him the great things of My Law, but they were counted as a strange thing.” But see how when He observes the sin of man He does not dash him away and spurn him with His foot? He does not shake him by the neck over the gulf of Hell, until his brain does reel and then drop him forever. But rather, He comes down from Heaven to plead with His creatures. He argues with them, He puts Himself, as it were, upon a level with the sinner, states His grievances and pleads His claim.

“O Ephraim, I have written unto you the great things of My Law, but they have been unto you as a strange thing”! I come here tonight in God’s stead, my Friends, to plead with you as God’s ambassador, to charge many of you with a sin. To lay it to your hearts by the power of the Spirit, so that you may be convinced of sin, of righteousness and of a judgment to come. The crime I charge you with is the sin of the text. God has written to you the great things of His Law, but they have been unto you as a strange thing.

It is concerning this blessed Book, the Bible, that I mean to speak tonight. Here lies my text—this Word of God. Here is the theme of my discourse, a theme which demands more eloquence than I possess. A subject upon which a thousand orators might speak at once. A mighty, vast, incomprehensible theme which might engross all eloquence throughout eternity and still it would remain unexhausted.

Concerning the Bible, I have three things to say tonight and they are all in my text. First, its author, “I have written.” Secondly, its subjects—the great things of God’s Law. And thirdly, its common treatment—It has been accounted by most men a strange thing.

1. First, then, concerning this book, who is THE AUTHOR? The text says that it is God. “I have written to him the great things of My Law.” Here lies my Bible—who wrote it? I open it and I find it consists of a series of tracts. The first five tracts were written by a man called Moses. I turn on and I find others. Sometimes I see David is the penman, at other times, Solomon. Here I read Micah, then Amos, then Hosea. As I turn further on, to the more luminous pages of the New

Testament, I see Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Paul, Peter, James and others, but when I shut up the book, I ask myself who is the Author of it?

Do these men jointly claim the authorship? Are they the composers of this massive volume? Do they between themselves divide the honor? Our holy religion answers, No! This volume is the writing of the living God—each letter was penned with an Almighty finger. Each Word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Albeit that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp and let sweet Psalms of melody drop from his fingers, but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp.

It may be that Solomon sang Canticles of love, or gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips and made the Preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum when his horses plow the waters or Habakkuk when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction. If I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven. If I turn to the smooth page of John, who tells of love, or the rugged, fiery chapters of Peter who speaks of the fire devouring God's enemies.

If I turn to Jude, who launches forth anathemas upon the foes of God—everywhere I find God speaking—it is God's voice, not man's. The Words are God's Words, the Words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth. This Bible is God's Bible. And when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, "I am the Book of God—Man, read me. I am God's writing—open my leaf, for I was penned by God. Read it, for He is my Author and you will see Him visible and manifest everywhere." "I have written to him the great things of My Law."

How do you know that God wrote the book? That is just what I shall not try to prove to you. I could, if I pleased, to a demonstration, for there are arguments enough, there are reasons enough, did I care to occupy your time tonight in bringing them before you—but I shall do no such thing. I might tell you, if I pleased, that the grandeur of the style is above that of any mortal writing and that all the poets who have ever existed, could not, with all their works united, give us such sublime poetry and such mighty language as is to be found in the Scriptures.

I might insist upon it, that the subjects of which it treats are beyond the human intellect. That man could never have invented the grand doctrines of a Trinity in the Godhead. Man could not have told us anything of the creation of the universe. He could never have been the author of the majestic idea of Providence, that all things are ordered according to the will of one great Supreme Being and work together for good. I might enlarge upon its honesty, since it tells the faults of its writers. Its unity, since it never belies itself. Its master simplicity, that he who runs may read it. And I might mention a hundred more things which would all prove to a demonstration, that the book is of God.

But I come not here to prove it. I am a Christian minister and you are Christians, or profess to be so and there is never any necessity for Christian ministers to make a point of bringing forth infidel arguments in order to answer them. It is the greatest folly in the world. Infidels, poor creatures, do not know their own arguments till we tell them and then they glean their blunted shafts to shoot them at the shield of Truth again. It is folly to bring forward these firebrands of Hell, even if we are well prepared to quench them. Let men of the world learn error of themselves, do not let us be propagators of their falsehoods.

True, there are some preachers who are short of stock and want them to fill up! But God's own chosen men need not do that. They are taught of God and God supplies them with matter, with language and with power. There may be someone here tonight who has come without faith, a man of reason, a freethinker. With him I have no argument at all. I profess not to stand here as a controversialist, but as a preacher of things that I know and feel. But I, too, have been like he. There was an evil hour when once I slipped the anchor of my faith, I cut the cable of my belief. I no longer moored myself hard by the coasts of Revelation.

I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind. I said to reason, "Be you my captain." I said to my own brain, "Be you my rudder." And I started on my mad voyage. Thank God it is all over now, but I will tell you its brief history. It was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought. I went on and as I went, the skies began to darken. But to make up for that deficiency, the waters were brilliant with flashes of light. I saw sparks flying upwards that pleased me and I thought, "If this is free thought, it is a happy thing." My thoughts seemed gems and I scattered stars with both my hands.

But soon, instead of these flashes of glory, I saw grim Fiends fierce and horrible start up from the waters. And as I dashed on, they gnashed their teeth and grinned upon me. They seized the prow of my ship and dragged me on, while I, in part, gloried at the rapidity of my motion, but yet shuddered at the terrific rate with which I passed the old landmarks of my faith. As I

hurried forward with an awful speed, I began to doubt my very existence. I doubted if there were a world, I doubted if there were such a thing as myself.

I went to the very verge of the dreary realms of unbelief. I went to the very bottom of the sea of infidelity. I doubted everything. But here the devil foiled himself. For the very extravagance of the doubt proved its absurdity. Just when I saw the bottom of that sea, there came a voice which said, "And can this doubt be true?" At this very thought I awoke. I started from that death-dream, which, God knows might have damned my soul and ruined this my body, if I had not awoke. When I arose faith took the helm. From that moment I doubted not.

Faith steered me back. Faith cried, "Away, away!" I cast my anchor on Calvary. I lifted my eye to God—and here I am alive and out of Hell. Therefore I speak what I know. I have sailed that perilous voyage. I have come safe to land. Ask me again to be an infidel! No, I have tried it, it was sweet at first, but bitter afterwards. Now, lashed to God's Gospel more firmly than ever, standing as on a rock of adamant, I defy the arguments of Hell to move me, for "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

But I shall neither plead nor argue this night. You profess to be Christian men and women, or else you would not be here. Your profession may be lies. What you *say* you are may be the very opposite of what you *really* are, but still I suppose you all admit that this is the Word of God. A thought or two then upon it. "I have written to him the great things of My Law."

First, my Friends, stand over this volume and *admire its authority*. This is no Solomon book. It is not the sayings of the sages of Greece. Here are not the utterances of philosophers of past ages. IF these words were written by man, we might reject them, but oh, let me think the solemn thought—that this book is God's handwriting—that these words are God's. Let me look at its date—it is dated from the hills of Heaven. Let me look at its letters—they flash glory on my eyes. Let me read the chapters—they are big with meaning and mysteries unknown. Let me turn over the prophecies—they are pregnant with unthought-of orders.

Oh, Book of books! And were you written by my God? Then will I bow before you. Book of vast authority you are a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven! Far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting you. Reason! Your place is to stand and find out what this volume means, not to tell what this Book *ought* to say. Come my reason, my intellect, sit down and listen, for these words are the Words of God. I do not know how to enlarge on this thought. Oh, if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God!

Oh, if you had been let into the secret chambers of Heaven, if you had beheld God grasping His pen and writing down these letters, then surely you would respect them. But they are just as much God's hand-writing as if you had seen God write them. This Bible is a book of authority, it is an authorized book, for God has written it. Oh, tremble, tremble, lest any of you despise it. Mark its authority, for it is the Word of God.

Then, since God wrote it, mark its *truthfulness*. If I had written it there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm on it and would cover it with their evil spawn. Had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once and perhaps quite right, too. But this is the Word of God. Come, search you critics and find a flaw. Examine it from its Genesis to its Revelations and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz or any earthy substance. This is a star without a speck, a sun without a blot! A light without darkness. A moon without its paleness. A glory without a dimness. O Bible! It cannot be said of any other book that it is perfect and pure, but of you we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in you, without a particle of folly.

This is the judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error—it is pure, unalloyed, perfect Truth. Why? Because God wrote it. Ah, charge God with error if you please. Tell Him that His book is not what it ought to be. I have heard men with prudish and mock-modesty, who would like to alter the Bible. And (I almost blush to say it) I have heard minister's alter God's Bible because they were afraid of it. Have you ever heard a man say, "He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved. But He that believes not,"—what does the Bible say?—"shall be *damm'd*." But that does not happen to be polite enough, so they say, "shall be *condemned*."

Gentlemen! Pull the velvet out of your mouths. Speak God's Word. We want none of your alterations. I have heard men in prayer, instead of saying, "Make your calling and *election* sure," say "Make your calling and *salvation* sure." Pity they were not born when God lived, far-far back, that they might have taught God how to write. Oh, impudence beyond all bounds! Oh, full-blown self-conceit! To attempt to dictate to the All-wise—to teach the Omniscient and instruct the Eternal. Strange that there should be men so vile as to use the penknife of Jehoiachin to cut passages of the Word, because they are unpalatable.

Oh you who dislike certain portions of the Holy Writ rest assured that your taste is corrupt and that God will not stay for your little opinion. Your dislike is the very reason why God wrote it, because you ought not to be suited. You have no right to be pleased. God wrote what you do not like. He wrote the Truth. Oh, let us bend in reverence before it, for God inspired it. It is pure Truth. Here from this fountain gushes *aqua vitae*—"the water of life," without a single particle of earth. Here from this sun there comes forth rays of radiance, without the mixture of darkness.

Blessed Bible. You are all Truth. Yet once more, before we leave this point let us stop and consider *the merciful nature of God*, in having written us a Bible at all. Ah, He might have left us without it, to grope our dark way, as blind men seek the wall. He might have suffered us to wander on with the star of reason as our only guide. I recollect a story of Mr. Hume, who so constantly affirmed that the light of reason is abundantly sufficient. Being at a good minister's house one evening, he had been discussing the question and declaring his firm belief in the sufficiency of the light of nature. On leaving, the minister offered to hold him a candle, to light him down the steps. He said, "No, the light of nature would be enough, the moon would do."

It so happened that the moon was covered with a cloud and he fell down the steps. "Ah," said the minister, "you had better have had a little light from above after all, Mr. Hume." So, supposing the light of nature to be sufficient, we had better have a little light from above, too and then we shall be sure to be right. Better have two lights than only one. The light of creation is a bright light. God may be seen in the stars, His name is written in gilt letters on the brow of night. You may discover His glory in the ocean waves, yes, in the trees of the field.

But it is better to read it in two books than in one. You will find it here more clearly revealed, for He has written this Book Himself and He has given you the key to understand it, it you have the Holy Spirit. Ah, Beloved, let us thank God for this Bible. Let us love it. Let us count it more precious than much fine gold.

But let me say one thing before I pass on to the second point. If this is the Word of God, what will become of some of you who have not read it for the last month? "Month, Sir! I have not read it for this year—Yes, there are some of you who have not read it at all. Most people treat the Bible very politely. They have a small pocket volume, neatly bound—they put a white pocket handkerchief around it—and carry it to their places of worship. When they get home, they lay it up in a drawer till next Sunday morning. Then it comes out again for a little bit of a treat and goes to chapel. That is all the poor Bible gets in the way of an airing.

That is your style of entertaining this heavenly Messenger. There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write "damnation" with your fingers. There are some of you who have not turned over your Bibles for a long, long, long while and what do you think? I tell you blunt words, but true words. What will God say at last? When you shall come before Him, He shall say, "Did you read My Bible?" "No." I wrote you a letter of mercy. Did you read it?" "No." "Rebel! I have sent you a letter inviting you to Me—did you ever read it?" "*Lord I never broke the seal. I kept it shut up.*" "Wretch!" says God, "then you deserve Hell. If I sent you a loving Epistle and you would not even break the seal—what shall I do with you?" Oh, let it not be so with you. Be Bible readers. Be Bible searchers.

II. Our second point is, THE SUBJECTS ON WHICH THE BIBLE TREATS. The words of the text are these—"I have written to him the great things of My Law." The Bible treats of great things and of great things only. There is nothing in this Bible which is unimportant. Every verse in it has a solemn meaning and if we have not found it out yet, we hope yet to do it. You have seen mummies wrapped round and round with folds of linen. Well, God's Bible is like that. It is a vast roll of white linen, woven in the loom of Truth. You will have to continue unwinding it, roll after roll, before you get the real meaning of it from the very depth.

And when you have found, as you think, a part of the meaning, you will still need to keep on unwinding, unwinding and all eternity you will be unwinding the words of this wondrous volume. Yet there is nothing in the Bible but great things. Let me divide, so as to be more brief. First, all things in this Bible are great—but secondly, some things are the greatest of all.

All things in the Bible are great. Some people think it does not matter what doctrines you believe—that it is immaterial what church you attend—that all denominations are alike. Well, I dislike Mrs. Bigotry above almost all people in the world and I never give her any compliment or praise—but there is another woman I hate equally as much and that is Mrs. Latitudinarianism, a well-known character, who has made the discovery that all of us are alike.

Now I believe that a man may be *saved* in any Church. Some have been saved in the Church of Rome—a few blessed men, whose names I could mention here. I know, blessed be God, that multitudes are saved in the Church of England—she has a host of pious, praying men in her midst. I think that all sections of Protestant Christians have a remnant according to the election of grace and they had need to have, some of them, a little salt, for otherwise they would go to corruption.

But when I say that, do you imagine that I think them all on a level? Are they all alike truthful? One set says infant Baptism is right, another says it is wrong, yet you say they are both right? I cannot see that. One teaches we are saved by free grace, another says that we are not, but are saved by free will. And yet you believe they are both right? I do not understand that. One says that God loves His people and never leaves off loving them. Another says that He did not love His people before they loved Him—that He often loves them and then ceases to love them and turns them away.

They may be both right in the main. But can they be both right when one says “Yes,” and the other says “No”? I must have a pair of spectacles to enable me to look backwards and forwards at the same time, before I can see that. It cannot be, Sirs, that they are both right. But some say they differ upon non-essentials. This text says, “I have written to him the *great* things of My Law.” There is nothing in God’s Bible which is not great. Did ever any of you sit down to see which was the purest religion? “Oh,” you say, “we never took the trouble. We went just where our father and mother went.” Ah, that is a profound reason indeed. You went where your father and mother did. I thought you were sensible people. I didn’t think you went where other people pulled you, but went of your own selves. I love my parents above all that breathe and the very thought that they believed a thing to be true, helps me to think it is correct. But I have not followed them—I belong to a different denomination—and I thank God I do. I can receive them as Christian Brothers and Sisters but I never thought that because they happened to be one thing I was to be the same.

No such thing. God gave me brains and I will use them. And if you have any intellect, use it too. Never say it doesn’t matter. It *does* matter. Whatever God has put here is of eminent importance—He would not have written a thing that was indifferent. Whatever is here is of some value, therefore search all questions, try all by the Word of God. I am not afraid to have what I preach tried by this Bible. Only give me a fair field and no favor and this Bible. If I say anything contrary to it, I will withdraw it the next Sabbath-Day. By this I stand, by this I fall. Search and see but don’t say, “It does not matter.”

If God says a thing, it must always be of importance. But while all things in God’s Word are important, *all are not equally important*. There are certain fundamental and vital Truths which must be believed, or otherwise no man would be saved. If you want to know what you must believe if you would be saved, you will find the great things of God’s Law between these two covers—they are all contained here. As a sort of digest or summary of the great things of the Law, I remember an old Friend of mine once saying, “Ah, you preach the three R’s and God will always bless you.” I said, “What are the three R’s?” And He answered, “Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration.”

They contain the sum and substance of divinity and of ruin. We were all ruined in the Fall. We were all lost when Adam sinned and we are all ruined by our own transgressions. We are all ruined by our own evil hearts and our own wicked wills. And we all shall be ruined unless grace saves us. Then there is a second R for Redemption. We are ransomed by the blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish and without spot. We are rescued by His power. We are ransomed by His merits. We are redeemed by His strength.

Then there is R for Regeneration. If we Have been pardoned, we must also be regenerated. For no man can partake of redemption unless he is regenerate. Let him be as good as he pleases. Let him serve God as he imagines, as much as he likes—unless he is regenerate and has a new heart, a new birth, he will still be in the first R, that is ruin. These things contain an epitome of the Gospel. I believe there is a better epitome in the five points of Calvinism—Election according to the foreknowledge of God. The natural depravity and sinfulness of man. Particular redemption by the blood of Christ. Effectual calling [irresistible grace] by the power of the Spirit—and ultimate perseverance of the saints by the efforts of God’s might.

I think all those need to be believed, in order to salvation. But I should not like to write a creed like the Athanasian, beginning with, “Whosoever should be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should deny the Catholic faith, which faith is this:”—when I got so far, I should stop, because I should not know what to write. I hold the Catholic faith of the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. It is not for me to draw up creeds. But I ask you to search the Scriptures, for this is the Word of Life.

God says, “I have written to him the great things of My Law.” Do you doubt their greatness? Do you think they are not worth your attention? Reflect a moment, Man. Where are you standing now?—

*“Lo, on a narrow neck of land
‘Twixt two unbounded seas I stand;
An inch of time, a moment’s space,
May lodge me in yon heavenly place,
Or shut me up in Hell.”*

I recollect standing on a seashore once, upon a narrow neck of land, thoughtless that the tide might come up. The tide kept continually washing up on either side. But wrapped in thoughts I still stood there until at last there was the greatest difficulty in getting on shore. The waves had washed between me and the shore. You and I stand each day on a narrow neck and there is one wave coming up there. See how near it is to your foot. Lo, another throws at every tick of the clock—"our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating funeral marches to the tomb."

We are always tending downwards to the grave each moment that we live. *This Bible* tells me that if I am converted, when I die there is a Heaven of joy and love to receive me. It tells me that angels' pinions shall be stretched and I, borne by strong cherubic wings, shall out-soar the lightning and mount beyond the stars, up to the Throne of God, to dwell forever—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin
With God eternally shut in.”*

Oh, it makes the hot tear start from my eye, it makes my heart too big for this, my body and my brain whines at the thought of—

*“Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me.”*

Oh, that sweet scene beyond the clouds. Sweet fields arrayed in living green and rivers of delight. Are not these great things? But then, poor unregenerate son! The Bible says if you are lost, you are lost forever. It tells you that if you die without Christ, without God, there is no hope for you, that there is a place without a gleam of hope where you shall read in burning letters, “you knew your duty, but you did it not.”

It tells you that you shall be driven from His presence with a “depart you cursed.” Are not these great things? Yes, Sirs, as Heaven is desirable, as Hell is terrible, as time is short, as eternity is infinite, as the soul is precious, as pains are to be shunned, as Heaven is to be sought, as God is eternal and as His Words are sure—these are great things—things you ought to listen to.

III. Our last point is THE TREATMENT WHICH THE POOR BIBLE RECEIVES IN THIS WORLD. It is accounted a strange thing. What does that mean—the Bible accounted a strange thing? In the first place, it means that it is very strange to some people, because *they never read it*. I remember reading, on one occasion, the sacred story of David and Goliath and there was a person present, positively grown up to years of maturity, who said to me, “Dear me! What an interesting story! What book is that in?”

And I recollect a person once coming to me in private—I spoke to her about her soul—she told me how deeply she felt, how she had a desire to serve God. But she found another Law in her members. I turned to a passage in Romans and read to her, “The good that I would I do not. And the evil which I would not that I do!” She said, “Is that in the Bible? I did not know it.” I did not blame her because she had no interest in the Bible till then. But I did wonder that there could be found persons who knew nothing about such a passage.

Ah, you know more about your ledgers than your Bible. You know more about your day-books than what God has written. Many of you will read a novel from beginning to end and what have you got? A mouthful of froth when you have done. But you cannot read the Bible—that solid, lasting, substantial and satisfying food goes uneaten, locked up in the cupboard of neglect—while anything that man writes—as a catch of the day, is greedily devoured. “I have written unto him the great things of My Law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing.”

You have never read it. I bring the broad charge against you. Perhaps you say I ought not to charge you with any such thing. I always think it better to have a worse opinion of you than too good an one. I charge you with this—you do not read your Bibles. Some of you never have read it through. I know I speak what your heart must say, is honest truth. You are not Bible readers. You say you have the Bible in your houses—do I think you are such heathens as not to have a Bible? But when did you last read it? How do you know that your spectacles, which you have lost, have not been there for the last three years?

Many people have not turned over its pages for a long time and God might say unto them, “I have written unto you the great things of My Law, but they have been accounted unto you a strange thing.”

There are others who read the Bible, but when they read it, *they say it is so horribly dry*. That young man over there says it is a “bore.” That is the word he uses. He says, “My mother said to me when you go up to town, read a chapter every day. Well, I thought I would please her and I said I would. I am sure I wish I had not. I did not read a chapter yesterday or the day before. We were so busy. I could not help it.” You do not love the Bible, do you? “No, there is nothing in it which is interesting.”

Ah, I thought so. But a little while ago *I* could not see anything in it. Do you know why? Blind men cannot see, can they? But when the Spirit touches the scales of the eyes they fall off. And when He puts eye-salve on, then the Bible becomes precious.

I remember a minister who went to see an old lady and he thought he would give her some precious promises out of the Word of God. Turning to one he saw written in the margin, “P,” and he asked, “What does this mean?” “That means precious, Sir.” Further down He saw “T and P,” and he asked what the letters meant. “That,” she said, “means tried and proved, for I have tried and proved it.”

If you have tried God’s Word and proved it. If it is precious to your souls, then you are Christians. But those persons who despise the Bible have “neither part nor lot in the matter.” If it is dry to you, you will be dry at last in Hell. If you do not esteem it as better than your necessary food, there is no hope for you, for you lack the greatest evidence of your Christianity.

Alas, Alas, The worst case is to come. *There are some people who hate the Bible*, as well as despise it. Is there such an one stepped in here? Some of you said, “Let us go and hear what the young preacher has to say to us.” This is what he has to say to you—“Behold you Despisers and wonder and perish.” This is what he has to say to you—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all that forget God.” And this again he has to say to you—“Behold there shall come in the last days, mockers like yourselves, walking after your own lusts.”

But more—he tells you tonight that if you are not saved, you must find salvation here. Therefore, despise not the Bible, but search it, read it and come unto it. Rest you well assured, O Scorners, that your laughs cannot alter Truth, your jests cannot avert your inevitable doom. Though in your hardihood you should make a league with death and sign a covenant with Hell—yet swift justice shall overtake you and strong vengeance strike you low. In vain do you jeer and mock, for eternal verities are mightier than your sophistries—nor can your smart sayings alter the Divine Truth of a single word of this volume of Revelation.

Oh, why do you quarrel with your best Friend and ill-treat your only Refuge? There yet remains hope even for the scorner. Hope in a Savior’s veins. Hope in the Father’s mercy. Hope in the Holy Spirit’s omnipotent agency.

I have done when I have said one word. My Friend, the philosopher says it may be very well for me to urge people to read the Bible. But He thinks there are a great many sciences far more interesting and useful than theology. *Extremely obliged to you for your opinion, Sir*. What science do you mean? The science of dissecting beetles and arranging butterflies? “No,” you say, “certainly not.” The science, then, of arranging stones and telling us of the strata of the earth? “No, not exactly that.” Which science then? “Oh, all sciences,” you say, “are better than the science of the Bible.” Ah, Sir, that is your opinion and it is because you are far from God that you say so.

But the science of Jesus Christ is the most excellent of sciences. Let no one turn away from the Bible because it is not a book of learning and wisdom. It is. Would you know astronomy? It is here—it tells you of the Sun of Righteousness and the Star of Bethlehem. Would you know botany? It is here—it tells you of the plant of renown—the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon. Would you know geology and mineralogy? You shall learn it here—for you may read of the Rock of Ages and the White Stone with a name graven thereon, which no man knows.

Would you study history? Here is the most ancient of all the records of the history of the human race. Whatever your science is, come and bend over this Book. Your science is here. Come and drink out of this fair fount of knowledge and wisdom and you shall find yourselves made wise unto salvation. Wise and foolish, babes and men, gray-headed sires, youths and maidens—I speak to you, I plead with you, I beg of you respect your Bibles and search them out—for in them you think you have eternal life and these are they which testify of Christ.

I have done. Let us go home and practice what we have heard. I have heard of a woman, who, when she was asked what she remembered of the minister’s sermon, said, “I don’t recollect anything of it. It was about short weights and bad measures and I didn’t recollect anything but to go home and burn the bushel.” So if you will remember to go home and burn the bushel, if you will recollect to go home and read your Bibles, I shall have said enough.

And may God, in His infinite mercy, when you read your Bibles, pour into your soul the illuminating rays of the Sun of Righteousness by the agency of the ever-adorable Spirit. Then you will, by God’s grace, read to your profit and to your soul’s salvation.

We may say of THE BIBLE—

*“God’s cabinet of revealed counsel ‘tis!
Where weal and woe, are ordered so
That every man may know which shall be his.
Unless his own mistake, false application make
It is the index to eternity.
He cannot miss of endless bliss*

*That takes this chart to steer by
Nor can he be mistook, that speaks by this Book.
It is the Book of God.
What if I should Say, God of books, let him that looks
Angry at that expression, as too bold,
His thoughts in silence smother, till he find such another.”*

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**