

Know Your Bible

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The principal phases of Bible doctrine, as well as many of the perplexing questions which confront the Bible student, are clearly explained in this series of tracts. The subjects are ably handled by men experienced in evangelistic work.

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01. THE BOOK FOR MODERN MAN

IN the world of literature the Bible stands unique and supreme. Esteemed by millions as "the noblest monument of English prose," it is also the world's richest treasure of poetry, inspiration, justice, morality, and divine revelation.

Patrick Henry, who once exclaimed, "Give me liberty or give me death!" also declared, "There is a Book worth all other books which were ever printed!" Dr. Bliss Perry, distinguished American educator and author, regards the Bible as "the most fascinating book, or rather library of books, ever put between covers;" and in words of highest praise the devoted Helen Keller voiced her ecstasy and delight: "But how shall I speak of the glories I have since discovered in the Bible? For years I have read it with an ever-broadening sense of joy and inspiration, and I love it as I love no other book."

But, sad to relate, in the whirl of modern activity the Bible is not now studied as formerly, and multitudes remain in "comfortable and colossal ignorance" of the Book that contributed so generously to American greatness and prosperity. In the language of Mary Ellen Chase:

"It supplied not only the names of our ancestors but the stout precepts by which they lived. They walked by its guidance; their rough places were made plain by their trust in its compassionate promises.

"It was a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. It was the source of the convictions that shaped the building of this country, of the faith that endured the first New England winters and later opened up the Great West. It laid the foundations of our educational system, built our earliest colleges, and dictated the training within our homes. In the words alike of Jefferson and Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams and Franklin it made better and more useful citizens to their country by

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reminding a man of his individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man. The Bible is, indeed, so embedded in our American heritage, that not to recognize its place there becomes a kind of national apostasy, and not to know and understand it, in these days when we give all for its principles of human worth and human freedom, an act unworthy of us as a people." - The Bible and the Common Reader, page 10.

The Bible is a universal book. Its language is simple and easily translated to every tongue and dialect, and its message is adapted alike to those of every nation, age, race, and condition of life. Like an encyclopedia it treats of countless themes. No human intellect has ever scaled such lofty heights, or penetrated to such profound depths. Neither Homer nor Milton ever wrote such sublime, exalted verse. Its history is wholly authentic, as attested by the world's best scholarship and the latest discoveries of archaeology. Its science is impregnable, and is not at war with any known facts of the physical world.

Its philosophy is unequalled, and its laws are the foundation of the world's jurisprudence. The charm of its narrative, the faithful delineation in its character sketches, the beauty and pathos of its prose and poetry, the directness and forcefulness of its style, the exalted standard of morality, and the atmosphere of marvelous love permeating all, place it in a class by itself, never equaled or approached by human genius.

The Bible speaks alike to the ruler in his palace and to the untutored pagan of the jungle. In its pages every need of the human heart is anticipated and satisfied. No one is omitted or forgotten. To the little child it says: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14. To young manhood and womanhood it appeals: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 John 2:15. To declining years it brings joy; for "the hoary head is a crown of glory." Proverbs 16:31.

It informs each wage earner and artisan that he is the child of a King, and bids every prince, judge, and statesman remember that he is a servant of God. It shows the poor the path to eternal riches, and advises the industrialist how to conduct his business and where safely to deposit his treasures. To one whose life is a sad, stained tangle it says: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." John 8:11. To millions of troubled hearts it speaks: "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

The Bible is an innerrant book. Far from being "exploded," as certain agnostics glibly assert, it stands unimpaired by the most recent developments of modern science. And how remarkable is this, when we recall that the Scriptures were written at a time when pagan philosophers entertained the most crude and absurd ideas concerning the physical universe! Yet the chemistry and astronomy of the Bible are far removed from the alchemy and astrology of the ancients. Today the most powerful telescopes bear their testimony that "the heavens declare the glory of God," so that eminent students of the starry vault are compelled to admit that "the un-devout astronomer is mad."

Textbooks on geology, physics, physiology, and cosmography require frequent revisions to keep pace with the march of science; while the statements of Job, Moses, David, Solomon, and Isaiah regarding air, clouds, heat, light, life, and sound need no change or alteration. All these witness to the supernatural character of Scripture; for no other book contains so much truth on many subjects, with an entire absence of error.

The Bible is an indestructible book, and its vitality is amazing. Many priceless histories and ancient literary treasures have wholly perished from the earth. Yet the Bible, the most hated of all volumes and the target of fiery onslaught and subtle criticism, lives on. "Tradition has dug for it a grave; intolerance has lighted for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; but the word of God still endures."

Royal edicts and legislative decrees have attempted its annihilation; Voltaire and Ingersoll have plotted its destruction; nations and empires have waged war upon it with sledge-hammer blows. The hammers wear themselves out, but the anvil is still strong and unimpaired, for it is "the word of God, which lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:23.

The Bible is an indispensable book. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keeps the law, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18. The nations of the past and present that have scorned the Scriptures and repudiated Christianity have also been dominated by a policy of rule or ruin and have plunged the world into untold suffering; while the lands of true scientific progress, of justice and freedom, are likewise the lands where the living word is read and revered. God's immortal classic is the Magna Charta of liberty.

The Bible is a prophetic book. By their forecast of future events, the Sacred Writings stand in a class by themselves. To mankind, tomorrow is an unknown adventure; to God, it is an open book. With unerring accuracy He declares "the end from the beginning" and outlines the history of unborn centuries.

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The Scriptures contain approximately one thousand prophecies. A large portion of these are already fulfilled, and others are today crystallizing into history. Of the entire number, no prophecy has miscarried or failed; and this remarkable record of the past and present gives certainty to the prediction of the future. Declares H. L. Hastings:

“So long as Babylon is in heaps; so long as Nineveh lies empty, void, and waste; . . . so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; so long as Israel is scattered among all nations; so long as Jerusalem is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles; so long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted courses - so long we have proof that one Omniscient Mind dictated the predictions of that book, and that ‘prophecy came not in old time by the will of man.’” - Will the Old Book Stand? page 20.

Also, let it be observed, many predictions of Scripture are being remarkably fulfilled in the world today. This Atomic Age is big with meaning and should inspire every Christian to study the certified Guidebook as never before.

The Bible is a divine book. All Scripture is “God-breathed,” for “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21. Consider the sixty-six books that comprise the Inspired Writings. These were written at various times throughout a period of fifteen centuries by approximately forty penmen. Among these writers were men of every rank and class: men educated in Egypt, in Babylon, in Jerusalem; men of the desert, men in captivity, and men at the zenith of human greatness.

These authors, representing five great civilizations, wrote history, prophecy, poetry, moral laws, civil laws, and rules of hygiene and sanitation, all of which are parts of the everlasting gospel. What an opportunity for conflict of opinions and a Babel of voices!

But, no; in its message and spirit the Book is one complete volume. A casual reading may present seeming discrepancies; but study it reverently from Genesis to Revelation, and you will find that there is no discord. One marvelous story runs from cover to cover; all parts blend together in the divine mosaic, for the person and presence of Jesus Christ is the master theme pervading every portion.

The Bible is a book of order and sequence. It begins with a garden, and ends with a city. It breaks silence with the words, “In the beginning God,” and closes with the benediction, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” It takes man from the barred entrance of the lost Paradise, and leaves him before the open gate of the New Jerusalem.

The first two chapters of the Bible describe the Eden that was lost; the last two portray the Eden to be restored. The third chapter of the Book tells of the entrance of sin; the third chapter from its close foretells the final exit of sin and the end of the warfare between Christ and Satan. The entire story is wonderful in its revelation of divine love, wonderful in the salvation it offers, wonderful in its plan for human redemption, wonderful in its history of the past, and wonderful in its glorious assurance of a future eternal homeland.

The Bible is a comforting book. It abounds in “exceeding great and precious promises” to the afflicted, the sick, the bereaved, the orphan, the outcast, the widow, the poverty-stricken, the humble, the meek, the tempted, the penitent, the obedient, and those who lack wisdom. To all who sincerely pray for peace, pardon, cleansing, protection, deliverance, strength and guidance, Christ underwrites the promissory note, and gives assurance of His good pleasure “to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20. “To all the promises of God He supplies the ‘yes’ that confirms them.” 2 Corinthians 1:20, Goodspeed.

Here is the only volume in the world that informs man of his noble origin upon this planet, that tells him why he is here, that clearly specifies his duties and obligations, and that envisions a glorious future for all who achieve the life of victory in Christ. “As it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The Bible is a transforming book. The thief who stole a purse from a Christian lady later returned it with the contents untouched. Why? In it he found a pocket Gospel of Luke. There he read the wonderful story of dying men restored to health, of blind men given sight, of deaf ears opened to hear, of lifelong cripples arising to run with the vigor of youth, of thieving embezzlers changed to upright citizens, and of Jesus, too, who died upon the cross to save sinful men. It was enough. The thief’s heart was won, and he returned the money.

For nineteen centuries, and in many lands and climes, the Book of God has been performing just such miracles as this. Through its mighty influence fiendish bandits, darkened savages, drunken wrecks,

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opium slaves, and would-be suicides have been transformed into kindly, honest Christian gentlemen and noble witnesses for Christ.

Millenniums come and go, yet the wonder Book of the ages has lost none of its vitality; it still speaks to the hearts of men with the same freshness and vigor that has strengthened the heroes of the cross in all ages. "Time writes no wrinkles on its brow," for it is "the word of God which lives and abides forever."

The Bible is a completely satisfying book. Said Job: "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." "I understand more than the ancients," observed King David, "because I keep Thy precepts." Jeremiah testified: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." From the Saviour of the world comes this inspiring message: "Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." Job 23:12; Psalm 119:100; Jeremiah 15:16; John 5:39.

"Read the Bible to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and direct the feet. It is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a lamp to the straying, a friend to sinners, and a sure guide to all."

Since thus you gives of thyself to me, How should I give myself, great Book, to thee!

02. IS JESUS YOUR FRIEND?

SOME year ago a captain in the army discovered Jesus. He had a good position, a good education, family ties of which he might well be proud, and money flowing freely into his coffers. But he was unhappy. He had become a slave to drink and other bad habits, and he had awakened to a realization of the sad fact that he was racing headlong down to ruin. But he was utterly helpless. He could not turn back. Despair gripped his heart. However, there on the brink of ruin he met Jesus. He resolved to give Him a chance. What a change! The hopeless drunkard became a transformed man, a victorious Christian, and a mighty power for good as he went about telling others of his new-found Friend.

Is there a deep, unsatisfied longing in your own heart today? Are you seeking money, in the hope that wealth will satisfy this longing? Are you praying God to bring the desired change in your circumstances, so that you may be a true Christian? Or have you lived long enough with yourself to know that the relief for which you sigh cannot come through either of these avenues? Well, it cannot; but there is a way to satisfy these longings that lie like burning coals in our aching hearts. Yes, there is one way, and only one way.

Now let us, in all sincerity and without self-pity, seek for the cause of our failures or our unhappiness. Yet need we seek for the cause? Has not the Holy Spirit, who brings conviction to every heart, already told us that to live the truly happy, the really worthwhile life, we must have Jesus for our Friend and Guide? The life fully controlled by Him is the life that wins. It is the victorious life. It is the life in which true happiness abides and from which flow blessings that make the lives of others radiant.

Perhaps you have been trying to find apart from Christ that which can be found only in Him! He is the secret of the peace that passes understanding, of the joy that never fails, and of all true success. Paul says Jesus has been "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." But all these blessings Jesus can give only to His friends, only to those who will come unto Him.

The world cannot know Jesus; but to His friends—to all who count Him their Friend—He says: "As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." It becomes their chief business here to show others what Jesus is like and to help them to know how much God loves all men and longs to save them. The Bible gives them their marching orders; and in the chamber of secret prayer the Master will help them to understand their orders more fully.

But to know personally one who lives this triumphant Christian life amid the humdrum of the daily routine interprets these orders to our hearts in a peculiarly human way. A victorious-life Christian is such a comfortable person to be with! Your name is safe with him; for his heart is pure, and gossip does not stain his lips. Your purse is safe with him, for he does not covet your gold. He does not trouble you with his worries, for he trusts God. You do not suffer, at his hands, from impatience, irritability, jealousy, or any of these kindred sins that often make us and our friends so uncomfortable; for, by the grace of God, he has put these away. His life is clean and strong, a veritable Gibraltar of purity, against which the tempter hurls his arrows in vain.