Pleasure & Profit in Bible Study

BY

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The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart . . . More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.—Psalm 19:8-10.

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CHAPTER I.

Close Contact with the Word of God—Word and Work—The Christian's Weapon—Young Converts and Bible Study—Up to Date—Every Case Met—"Great Peace"—Starving the Soul—The Guide-Book to Heaven.

A QUICKENING that will last must come through the Word of God. A man stood up in one of our meetings and said he hoped for enough out of the series of meetings to last him all his life. I told him he might as well try to eat enough breakfast at one time to last him his lifetime. That is a mistake that people are making; they are running to religious meetings and they think the meetings are going to do the work. But if these don't bring you into closer contact with the Word of God, the whole impression will be gone in three months. The more you love the Scriptures, the firmer will be your faith. There is little backsliding when people love the Scriptures. If you come into closer contact with the Word, you will gain something that will last, because the Word of God is going to endure. In the one hundred and nineteenth psalm David prayed nine times that God would quicken him—according to His word, His law, His judgment, His precepts, etc.

If I could say something that would induce Christians to have a deeper love for the Word of God, I should feel this to be the most important service that could be rendered to them. Do you ask: How can I get in love with the Bible? Well, if you will only arouse yourself to the study of it, and ask God's assistance, He will assuredly help you.

WORD AND WORK.

Word and Work make healthy Christians. If it be all Word and no work, people will suffer from what I may call religious gout. On the other hand if it be all work and no Word, it will not be long before they will fall into all kinds of sin and error; so that they will do more harm than good. But if we first study the Word and then go to work, we shall be healthy, useful Christians. I never saw a fruit-bearing Christian who was not a student of the Bible. If a man neglects his Bible, he may pray and ask God to use him in His work; but God cannot make use of him, for there is not much for the Holy Ghost to work upon. We must have the Word itself, which is sharper than any two-edged sword.

We have a great many prayer meetings, but there is something just as important as prayer, and that is that we read our Bibles, that we have Bible study and Bible lectures and Bible classes, so that we may get hold of the Word of God. When I pray, I talk to God, but when I read the Bible, God is talking to me; and it is really more important that God should speak to me than that I should speak to Him I believe we should know better how to pray if we knew our Bibles better. What is an army good for if they don't know how to use their weapons? What is a young man starting out in the Christian work good for it he does not know how to use his Bible? A man isn't worth much in battle if he has any doubt about his weapon, and I have never found a man who has doubts about the Bible who has amounted to much in Christian work. I have seen work after work wrecked because men lost confidence in the spirit of this Old Book.

YOUNG CONVERTS.

If young converts want to be used of God, they must feed on His Word. Their experience may be very good and very profitable at the outset, and they may help others by telling it; but if they keep on doing nothing else but telling their experience, it will soon become stale and unprofitable, and people will weary of hearing the same thing over and over again. But when they have told how they have been converted, the next thing is to feed on the Word. We are not fountains ourselves; but the Word of God is the true fountain.

And if we feed on the Word, it will be so easy then to speak to others; and not only that, but we shall be growing in grace all the while, and others will take notice of our walk and conversation. So few grow, because so few study. I would advise all young converts to keep as much as they can in the company of more experienced Christians. I like to keep in the society of those who know more than I do; and I never lose a chance of getting all the good I can out of them. Study the Bible carefully and prayerfully; ask of others what this passage means and what that passage means, and when you have become practically acquainted with the great truths it contains, you will have less to fear from the world, the flesh, and the devil. You will not be disappointed in your Christian life.

SOMETHING NEW.

People are constantly saying: We want something new; some new doctrine, some new idea. Depend upon it, my friends, if you get tired of the Word of God, and it becomes wearisome to you, you are out of communion with Him.

When I was in Baltimore last, my window looked out on an Episcopal Church. The stained-glass windows were dull and uninviting by day, but when the lights shone through at night, how beautiful they were! So when the Holy Spirit touches the eyes of your understanding and you see Christ shining through the pages of the Bible, it becomes a new book to you.

A young lady once took up a novel to read, but found it dull and uninteresting. Some months afterwards, she was introduced to the author and in the course of time became his wife. She then found that there was something in the book, and her opinion of it changed. The change was not in the book, but in herself. She had come to know and love the writer. Some Christians read the Bible as a duty, if they read it at all; but as soon as a man or woman sees Christ as the chiefest among ten thousand, the Bible becomes the revelation of the Father's love and becomes a never-ending charm. A gentleman asked another, "Do you often read the Bible?" "No," was the answer, "I frankly admit I do not love God." "No more did I." the first replied, "but God loved me."

A great many people seem to think that the Bible is out of date, that it is an old book, and they think it has passed its day. They say it was very good for the dark ages, and that there is some very good history in it, but it was not intended for the present time; we are living in a very enlightened age and men can get on very well without the old book; we have outgrown it. Now you might just as well say that the sun, which has shone so long, is now so old that it is out of date, and that whenever a man builds a house he need not put any windows in it, because we have a newer light and a better light; we have gaslight and electric light. These are something new; and I would advise people, if they think the Bible is too old and worn out, when they build houses, not to put windows in them, but just to light them with electric light; that is something new and that is what they are anxious for.

EVERY CASE MET.

Bear in mind there is no situation in life for which you cannot find some word of consolation in Scripture. If you are in affliction, if you are in adversity and trial, there is a promise for you. In joy and sorrow, in health and in sickness, in poverty and in riches, in every condition of life, God has a promise stored up in His Word for you. In one way or another every case is met, and the truth is commended to every man's conscience. It is said that Richard Baxter, author of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," felt the force of miracles chiefly in his youth; in maturer years he was more impressed by fulfilled prophecy; and towards the end of his life he felt the deepest satisfaction in his own ripe experience of the power of the Gospel.

"If you are impatient, sit down quietly and commune with Job.
If you are strong-headed, read of Moses and Peter.
If you are weak-kneed, look at Elijah.
If there is no song in your heart, listen to David.
If you are a politician, read Daniel.
If you are getting sordid, read Isaiah.
If you are chilly, read of the beloved disciple.
If your faith is low, read Paul.
If you are getting lazy, watch James.
If you are losing sight of the future, read in Revelation of the promised land."

"GREAT PEACE."

In Psalm 119:165, we find these words: "Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them." The study of God's Word will secure peace. Take those Christians who are rooted and grounded in the Word of God, and you will find they have great peace; but those who don't study their Bible, and don't know their Bible, are easily offended when some little trouble comes, or some little persecution, and their peace is all disturbed; just a little breath of opposition and their peace is all gone.

Sometimes I am amazed to see how little it takes to drive all peace and comfort from some people. A slandering tongue will readily blast it. But if we have the peace of God, the world cannot take that from us. It cannot give it; it cannot destroy it. We must get it from above the world, it is the peace which Christ gives. "Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Christ says, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Now, you will notice that where ever there is a Bible-taught Christian, one who has his Bible well marked, and who daily feeds upon the Word with prayerful meditation, he will not be easily offended.

Such are the people who are growing and working all the while. But it is the people who never open their Bibles, who never study the Scriptures, who become offended, and are wondering why they are having such a hard time. They are the persons who tell you that Christianity is not what it has been recommended to them; that they have found it is not all that we claim it to be. The real trouble is, they have not done as the Lord has told them to do. They have neglected the Word of God. If they had been studying the Word of God, they would not be in that condition, they would not have wandered these years away from God, living on the husks of the world. They have neglected to care for the new life, they haven't fed it, and the poor soul, being starved, sinks into weakness and decay, and is easily stumbled or offended. If a man is born of God, he can not thrive without God.

I met a man who confessed his soul had fed on nothing for forty years. "Well," said I, "that is pretty hard for the soul—giving it nothing to feed on!" That man is a type of thousands and tens of thousands to-day; their poor souls are starving. We take good care of this body that we inhabit for a day, and then leave; we feed it three times a day, and we clothe it, and deck it, and by and by it is going into the grave to rot; but the inner man, that is to live on and on forever, is lean and starved. "Man shall not Live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

THE GUIDEBOOK TO THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME.

If a man is traveling and does not know where he is going to, or how he is going to get there, you know he has a good deal of trouble, and does not enjoy the trip as much as if he has a guidebook at hand. It is not safe traveling, and he does not know how to make through connections. Now, the Bible is a guidebook in the journey of life, and the only one that points the way to Heaven. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Let us take heed then not to refuse the light and the help it gives.

CHAPTER II.

Doubting and Inquiring—Proving—A Savour of Life unto Life, or Death unto Death—Understanding the Scriptures—Cavilling—Using the Penknife—The Supernatural—Inspiration.

WE DO NOT ask men and women to believe in the Bible without enquiry. It is not natural to man to accept the things of God without question. If you are to be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is within you, you must first be an enquirer yourself. But do not be a dishonest doubter, with your heart and mind proof against evidence. Do not be a doubter because you think it is "intellectual;" do not ventilate your doubts. "Give us your convictions," said a German writer, "we have enough doubts of our own." Be like Thomas who did not accept Jesus' offer to feel the nail-prints in His hand and side; his heart was open to conviction. "Faith," says John McNeill, "is not to be obtained at your finger-ends."

If you are filled with the Word of God, there will not be any doubts. A lady said to me once, "Don't you have any doubts?" No, I don't have time—too much work to be done. Some people live on doubt. It is their stock in trade. I believe the reason there are so many Christians who are without the full evidence of the relationship, with whom you only see the Christian graces cropping out every now and then, is that the Bible is not taken for doctrine, reproof and instruction.

PROVING.

Now the request comes: "I wish you would prove to me that the Bible is true." The Book will prove itself if you will let it; there is living power in it. "For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." It does not need defence so much as it needs studying. It can defend itself. It is not a sickly child that needs nursing. A Christian man was once talking to a skeptic who said he did not believe the Bible. The man read certain passages, but the skeptic said again, "I don't believe a word of it." The man kept on reading until finally the skeptic was convicted; and the other added: "When I have proved a good sword, I keep using it." That is what we want to-day. It is not our work to make men believe: that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

CONVICTED—LOST—SAVED.

A man once sat down to read it an hour each evening with his wife. In a few evenings he stopped in the midst of his reading and said: "Wife, if this Book is true, we are wrong." He read on, and before long, stopped again and said: "Wife, if this Book is true, we are lost." Riveted to the Book and deeply anxious, he still read on, and soon exclaimed: "Wife, if this Book is true, we may be saved." It was not many days before they were both converted. This is the one great end of the Book, to tell man of God's great salvation. Think of a book that can lift up our drooping spirits, and recreate us in God's image!

It is an awful responsibility to have such a book and to neglect its warnings, to reject its teachings. It is either the savour of death unto death, or of life unto life. What if God should withdraw it, and say: "I will not trouble you with it any more?"

CAN'T UNDERSTAND.

You ask what you are going to do when you come to a thing you cannot understand. I thank God there is a height in that Book I do not know anything about, a depth I have never been able to fathom, and it makes the Book all the more fascinating. If I could take that Book up and read it as I can any other book and understand it at one reading, I should have lost faith in it years ago. It is one of the strongest proofs that that Book must have come from God, that the acutest men who have dug for fifty years have laid down their pens and said, "There is a depth we know nothing of." "No scripture," said Spurgeon, "is exhausted by a single explanation. The flowers of God's garden bloom, not only double, but seven-fold: they are continually pouring forth fresh fragrance." A man came to me with a difficult passage some time ago and said, "Moody, what do you do with that?" "I do not do anything with it." "How do you understand it?" "I do not understand it." "How do you explain it?" "I do not explain it." "What do you do with it?" "I do not do anything." "You do not believe it, do you?" "Oh, yes, I believe it." There are lots of things I do not understand, but I believe them. I do not know anything about higher mathematics, but I believe in them. I do not understand astronomy, but I believe in astronomy. Can you tell me why the same kind of food turns into flesh, fish, hair, feathers, hoofs, finger-nails —according as it is eaten by one animal or another? A man told me a while ago he could not believe a thing he had never seen. I said, "Man, did you ever see your brain?"

Dr. Talmage tells the story that one day while he was bothering his theological professor with questions about the mysteries of the Bible, the latter turned on him and said: "Mr. Talmage, you will have to let God know some things you don't."

A man once said to an infidel: "The mysteries of the Bible don't bother me. I read the Bible as I eat fish. When I am eating fish and come across a bone. I don't try to swallow it, I lay it aside. And when I am reading the Bible and come across something I can't understand, I say, 'There is a bone,' and I pass it by. But I don't throw the fish away because of the bones in it; and I don't throw my Bible away because of a few passages I can't explain."

Pascal said, "Human knowledge must be understood in order to be loved; but Divine knowledge must be loved to be understood." That marks the point of failure of most critics of the Bible. They do not make their brain the servant of their heart.

CAVILLERS.

Did you ever notice that the things that men cavil most about are the very things to which Christ has set His seal? Men say, "You don't believe in the story of Noah and the flood, do you?" Well, if I give it up, I must give up the Gospel, I must give up the teachings of Jesus Christ. Christ believed in the story of Noah, and connected that with His return to earth. "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Men say, "You don't believe in the story of Lot and Sodom, do you?" Just as much as I believe the teachings of Jesus Christ. "As it was in the days of Lot . . . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Men say, "You don't believe in the story of Lot's wife, do you?" Christ believed it. "Remember Lot's wife." "You don't believe the story of Israel looking to a brass serpent for deliverance, do you?" Christ believed it and connected it with His own cross. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Men say, "You don't believe the children of Israel were fed with manna in the desert, do you?" "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." Men say, "You don't believe they drank water that came out of a rock?" Christ believed it and taught it. Men say, "You don't believe in the story of Elijah being fed by the widow, do you?" Certainly. Christ said there were many widows in the days of Elijah, but Elijah was fed by only one widow. Christ referred to it Himself, He set His seal to it. The Son of God believed it, and, "shall the servant be above his master?"

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

Men say, "Well, you don't believe in the story of Jonah and the whale, do you?" I want to tell you I do believe it. A few years ago there was a man whom some one thought a little unsound, and they didn't want him to speak on the Northfield platform. I said, "I will soon find out whether or not he is sound." I asked him, "Do you believe the whale swallowed Jonah?" "Yes," he said, "I do." I said "All right, then I want you to come and speak." He came and gave a lecture on Jonah. In Matthew they twice asked Jesus for a sign, and He said the only sign this generation shall have shall be the sign of Jonah in the whale's belly. He connected that with His resurrection, and I honestly believe that if we overthrow the one, we must overthrow the other. As you get along in life and have perhaps as many friends on the other side of the river as you have on this side, you will get about as much comfort out of the story of the resurrection as any other story in the Bible. Christ had no doubt about the story. He said His resurrection would be a sign like that given unto the Ninevites. It was the resurrected man Jonah who walked through the streets of Nineveh. It must be supposed that the men of Nineveh had heard of Jonah being thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish. I think it is a master-stroke of Satan to make us doubt the resurrection. But these modern philosophers have made a discovery. They say a whale's throat is no larger than a man's fist, and it is a physical impossibility for a whale to swallow a man. The book of Jonah says that God prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. Couldn't God make a fish large enough to swallow Jonah? If God could create a world, I think He could create a fish large enough to swallow a million men. As the old woman said, "Could He not, if He chose, prepare a man that could swallow a whale?" A couple of these modern philosophers were going to Europe some time ago, and a Scotch friend of mine was on board who knew his Bible pretty well. They got to talking about the Bible, and one of them said: "I am a scientific man, and I have made some investigation of that Book, and I have taken up some of the statements in it, and I have examined them, and I pronounce them untrue. There is a statement in the Bible that Balaam's ass spoke. I have taken pains to examine the mouth of an ass and it is so formed that it could not speak." My friend stood it as long as he could and then said, "Eh, mon, you make the ass and I will make him speak." The idea that God could not speak through the mouth of an ass!

CLIPPING THE BIBLE.

There is another class. It is quite fashionable for people to say, "Yes, I believe the Bible, but not the supernatural. I believe everything that corresponds with this reason of mine." They go on reading the Bible with a pen-knife, cutting out this and that. Now, if I have a right to cut out a certain portion of the Bible, I don't know why one of my friends has not a right to cut out another, and another friend to cut out another part, and so on. You would have a queer kind of Bible if everybody cut out what he wanted to. Every adulterer would cut out everything about adultery; every liar would cut out everything about lying; every drunkard would be cutting out what he didn't like. Once, a gentleman took his Bible around to his minister's and said, "That is your Bible." "Why do you call it my Bible?" said the minister. "Well," replied the gentleman, "I have been sitting under your preaching for five years, and when you said that a thing in the Bible was not authentic, I cut it out." He had about a third of the Bible cut out; all of Job, all of Ecclesiastes and Revelation, and a good deal besides. The minister wanted him to leave the Bible with him; he didn't want the rest of his congregation to see it. But the man said, "Oh, no! I have the covers left, and I will hold on to them." And off he went holding on to the covers. If you believed what some men preach, you would have nothing but the covers left in a few months. I have often said that if I am going to throw away the Bible, I will throw it all into the fire at once. There is no need of waiting five years to do what you can do as well at once. I have yet to find a man who begins to pick at the Bible that does not pick it all to pieces in a little while. A minister whom I met awhile ago said to me, "Moody, I have given up preaching except out of the four Gospels. I have given up all the Epistles, and all the Old Testament; and I do not know why I cannot go to the fountain head and preach as Paul did. I believe the Gospels are all there is that is authentic." It was not long before he gave up the four Gospels, and finally gave up the ministry. He gave up the Bible, and God gave him up.

A prophet who had been sent to a city to warn the wicked, was commanded not to eat meat within its walls. He was afterwards deceived into doing so by an old prophet, who told him that an angel had come to him and said he might return and eat with him. That prophet was destroyed by a lion for his disobedience. If an angel should come and tell a different story from that in the Book, don't believe it. I am tired and sick of people following men. It is written, "though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." Do you think with more light before us than the prophet had that we can disobey God's Word with impunity?

THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE BIBLE.

It is a most absurd statement for a man to say he will have nothing to do with the supernatural, will not believe the supernatural. If you are going to throw off the supernatural, you might as well burn your Bibles at once. You take the supernatural out of that Book and you have taken Jesus Christ out of it, you have taken out the best part of the Book. There is no part of the Bible that does not teach supernatural things. In Genesis it says that Abraham fell on his face and God talked with him. That is supernatural. If that did not take place, the man who wrote Genesis wrote a lie, and out goes Genesis. In Exodus you find the ten plagues which came upon Egypt. If that is not true, the writer of Exodus was a liar. Then in Leviticus it is said that fire consumed the two sons of Aaron. That was a supernatural event, and if that was not true we must throw out the whole book. In Numbers is the story of the brazen serpent. And so with every book in the Old Testament; there's not one in which you do not find something supernatural. There are more supernatural things about Jesus Christ than in any other portion of the Bible, and the last thing a man is willing to give up is the four Gospels. Five hundred years before His birth, the angel Gabriel came down and told Daniel that He should be born. "And whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." Again, Gabriel comes down to Nazareth and tells the Virgin that she should be the mother of the Saviour. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus." We find, too, that the angel went into the temple and told Zacharias that he was to be the father of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah; Zacharias was struck dumb for nine months because of his unbelief. Then when Christ was born, we find angels appearing to the shepherds at Bethlehem, telling them of the birth of the Saviour. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The wise men seeing the star in the east and following it was surely supernatural. So was the warning that God sent to Joseph in a dream, telling him to flee to Egypt. So was the fact of our Lord's going into the temple at the age of twelve, discussing with the doctors, and being a match for them all. So were the circumstances attending His baptism, when God spake from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son." For three and a half years Jesus trod the streets and highways of Palestine. Think of the many wonderful miracles that He wrought during those years. One day He speaks to the leper and he is made whole; one day He speaks to the sea and it obeys Him. When He died the sun refused to look upon the scene; this old world recognized Him and reeled and rocked like a drunken man. And when He burst asunder the bands of death and came out of Joseph's sepulchre, that was supernatural. Christmas Evans, the great Welsh preacher, says: "Many reformations die with the reformer, but this reformer ever lives to carry on His reformation." Thank God we do not worship a dead Jew. If we worshipped a dead Jew, we would not have been quickened and have received life in our souls. I thank God our Christ is a supernatural Christ, and this Book a supernatural Book, and I thank God I live in a country where it is so free that all men can read it.

Some people think we are deluded, that this is imagination. Well, it is a glorious imagination, is it not? It has lasted between thirty and forty years with me, and I think it is going to last while I live, and when I go into another world. Some one, when reading about Paul, said he was mad. Well, it was replied, if he was he had a good keeper on the way, and a good asylum at the end of the route. I wish we had a lot of mad men in America just now like Paul.

INSPIRATION.

When Paul wrote to Timothy that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God and was profitable, he meant what he said. “Well,” some say, “do you believe all Scripture is given by inspiration?” Yes, every word of it; but I don’t believe all the actions and incidents it tells of were inspired. For instance, when the devil told a lie he was not inspired to tell a lie, and when a wicked man like Ahab said anything, he was not inspired; but some one was inspired to write it, and so all was given by inspiration and is profitable.

Inspiration must have been verbal in many, if not in all, cases. Peter tells us, regarding salvation through the sufferings of Christ:

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

So that the prophets themselves had to enquire and search diligently regarding the words they uttered under the inspiration of the Spirit.

A man said to a young convert: “How can you prove that the Bible is inspired?” He replied, “Because it inspires me.” I think that is pretty good proof. Let the Word of God into your soul, and it will inspire you, it can not help it.03

CHAPTER III.

The Old and the New Testaments.

I WANT to show how absurd it is for anyone to say he believes the New Testament and not the Old. It is a very interesting fact that of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, it is recorded that our Lord made quotations from no less than twenty-two. Very possibly He may have quoted from all of them; for we have only fragments reported of what He said and did. You know the Apostle John tells us that the world could scarcely contain the books that could be written, if all the sayings and doings of our Lord were recorded. About eight hundred and fifty passages in the Old Testament are quoted or alluded to in the New; only a few occurring more than once.

In the Gospel by Matthew there are over a hundred quotations from twenty of the books in the Old Testament. In the Gospel of Mark there are fifteen quotations taken from thirteen of the books. In the Gospel of Luke there are thirty-four quotations from thirteen books. In the Gospel of John there are eleven quotations from six books. In the four Gospels alone there are more than one hundred and sixty quotations from the Old Testament. You sometimes hear men saying they do not believe all the Bible, but they believe the teaching of Jesus Christ in the four Gospels. Well, if I believe that, I have to accept these hundred and sixty quotations from the Old Testament. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians there are fifty-three quotations from the Old Testament; sometimes he takes whole paragraphs from it. In Hebrews there are eighty-five quotations, in that one book of thirteen chapters. In Galatians, sixteen quotations. In the book of Revelation alone, there are two hundred and forty-five quotations and allusions.

A great many want to throw out the Old Testament. It is good historic reading, they say, but they don’t believe it is a part of the Word of God, and don’t regard it as essential in the scheme of salvation. The last letter Paul wrote contained the following words: “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” All the Scriptures which the apostles possessed were the Old Testament.

When skeptics attack its truths, these find it convenient to say, “Well, we don’t endorse all that is in the Old Testament,” and thus they avoid an argument in defence of the Scriptures. It is very important that every Christian should not only know what the Old Testament teaches, but he should accept its truths, because it is upon this that truth is based. Peter said the Scriptures are not given for any private interpretation, and in speaking of the Scriptures, referred to the Old Testament and not to the New.

If the Old Testament Scriptures are not true, do you think Christ would have so often referred to them, and said the Scriptures must be fulfilled? When told by the tempter that He might call down the angels from heaven to interpose in His behalf, he said: “Thus it is written.” Christ gave Himself up as a sacrifice that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Was it not said that He was numbered with the transgressors? And when He talked with two of His disciples by the way journeying to Emmaus, after His resurrection, did He not say: “Ought not these things to be? am I not to suffer?” And beginning at Moses He explained unto them in all the Scriptures concerning Himself, for the one theme of the Old Testament is the Messiah. In Psalm 40:7, it says: “In the volume of the book it is written of me.” “What Book?” asks Luther, “and what Person? There is only one book—the Bible; and only one person—Jesus Christ.” Christ referred to the Scriptures and their fulfillment in Him, not only after He arose from the dead, but in the book of Revelation He used them in Heaven. He spoke to John of them on the Isle of Patmos, and used the very things in them that men are trying to cast out. He never found fault with or rejected them.

If Jesus Christ could use the Old Testament, let us use it. May God deliver us from the one-sided Christian who reads only the New Testament and talks against the Old!

CHAPTER III.

The Old and the New Testaments.

I WANT to show how absurd it is for anyone to say he believes the New Testament and not the Old. It is a very interesting fact that of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, it is recorded that our Lord made quotations from no less than twenty-two. Very possibly He may have quoted from all of them; for we have only fragments reported of what He said and did. You know the Apostle John tells us that the world could scarcely contain the books that could be written, if all the sayings and doings of our Lord were recorded. About eight hundred and fifty passages in the Old Testament are quoted or alluded to in the New; only a few occurring more than once.

In the Gospel by Matthew there are over a hundred quotations from twenty of the books in the Old Testament. In the Gospel of Mark there are fifteen quotations taken from thirteen of the books. In the Gospel of Luke there are thirty-four quotations from thirteen books. In the Gospel of John there are eleven quotations from six books. In the four Gospels alone there are more than one hundred and sixty quotations from the Old Testament. You sometimes hear men saying they do not believe all the Bible, but they believe the teaching of Jesus Christ in the four Gospels. Well, if I believe that, I have to accept these hundred and sixty quotations from the Old Testament. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians there are fifty-three quotations from the Old Testament; sometimes he takes whole paragraphs from it. In Hebrews there are eighty-five quotations, in that one book of thirteen chapters. In Galatians, sixteen quotations. In the book of Revelation alone, there are two hundred and forty-five quotations and allusions.

A great many want to throw out the Old Testament. It is good historic reading, they say, but they don’t believe it is a part of the Word of God, and don’t regard it as essential in the scheme of salvation. The last letter Paul wrote contained the following words: “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” All the Scriptures which the apostles possessed were the Old Testament.

When skeptics attack its truths, these find it convenient to say, “Well, we don’t endorse all that is in the Old Testament,” and thus they avoid an argument in defence of the Scriptures. It is very important that every Christian should not only know what the Old Testament teaches, but he should accept its truths, because it is upon this that truth is based. Peter said the Scriptures are not given for any private interpretation, and in speaking of the Scriptures, referred to the Old Testament and not to the New.

If the Old Testament Scriptures are not true, do you think Christ would have so often referred to them, and said the Scriptures must be fulfilled? When told by the tempter that He might call down the angels from heaven to interpose in His behalf, he said: “Thus it is written.” Christ gave Himself up as a sacrifice that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Was it not said that He was numbered with the transgressors? And when He talked with two of His disciples by the way journeying to Emmaus, after His resurrection, did He not say: “Ought not these things to be? am I not to suffer?” And beginning at Moses He explained unto them in all the Scriptures concerning Himself, for the one theme of the Old Testament is the Messiah. In Psalm 40:7, it says: “In the volume of the book it is written of me.” “What Book?” asks Luther, “and what Person? There is only one book—the Bible; and only one person—Jesus Christ.” Christ referred to the Scriptures and their fulfillment in Him, not only after He arose from the dead, but in the book of Revelation He used them in Heaven. He spoke to John of them on the Isle of Patmos, and used the very things in them that men are trying to cast out. He never found fault with or rejected them.

If Jesus Christ could use the Old Testament, let us use it. May God deliver us from the one-sided Christian who reads only the New Testament and talks against the Old!

CHAPTER IV.

“My Word shall not Pass Away”—Printing the Revised Version in Chicago—Circulation of the Bible.

CHRIST speaking of the law, said: “One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled.” In another place He said: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.” Now, let us keep in mind that the only Scripture the apostles and Christ had was the Old Testament. The New Testament was not written. I will put that as the old and new covenant. “One jot or tittle of the law shall in no wise pass away until all be fulfilled,”—the old covenant; and then Christ comes and adds these words: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away,”—the new covenant. Now, notice how that has been fulfilled. There was no short-hand reporter following Him around taking down His words; there were no papers to print the sermons, and they wouldn’t have printed His sermons if there had been any daily papers—the whole church and all the religious world were against Him. I can see one of your modern free-thinkers standing near Him, and he hears Christ say: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.” I see the scornful look on his face as he says: “Hear that Jewish peasant talk! Did you ever hear such conceit, such madness? He says Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his Word shall not pass away.” My friend, I want to ask you this question—have they passed away? Do you know that the sun has shone on more Bibles to-day than ever before in the history of the world? There have been more Bibles printed in the last ten years than in the first eighteen hundred years. They tried in the dark ages to chain it, and keep it from the nations, but God has preserved it, and the British and American Bible Societies print thousands of Bibles every day. One house in New York has sold one hundred thousand Oxford Bibles during the last year.

PRINTING THE REVISED VERSION.

Suppose some one had said that when we had a revised version of the New Testament, it was going to have such a large circulation—men reading it wherever the English language is spoken—the statement would hardly have been believed. The new version came out in New York on a Friday—on the same day that it was published in London. Chicago did not want to be behind New York. At that time the quickest train between the two cities could not accomplished the journey in less than about twenty-six hours. It would be late on Saturday afternoon before the copies could reach Chicago, and the stores would be closed. So one of the Chicago daily papers set ninety operators at work and had the whole of the new version, from Matthew to Revelation, telegraphed to Chicago on Friday; it was put at once into print and sold on the streets of that city next day. If some one had said years ago, before telegraphs were introduced, that this would be done, it would have been thought an impossibility. Yet it has been done.

Notwithstanding all that skeptics and infidels say against the old Book, it goes on its way. These objectors remind one of a dog barking at the moon; the moon goes on shining just the same. Atheists keep on writing against the Bible; but they do not make much progress, do they? It is being spread all abroad—silently, and without any blasts of trumpets. The lighthouse does not blow a trumpet; it goes on shedding its light all around. So the Bible is lighting up the nations of the earth. It is said that a lecturer on Secularism was once asked, “Why can’t you let the Bible alone, if you don’t believe it?” The honest reply was at once made, “Because the Bible won’t let me alone.”

CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible was about the first book ever printed, and to-day New Testaments are printed in three hundred and fifty-three different languages, and are going to the very corners of the earth. Wherever the Bible has not been translated, the people have no literature. It will not be long before the words of Jesus Christ will penetrate the darkest parts of the earth, and the darkest islands of the sea. When Christ said, “The Scriptures can not be broken,” He meant every word He said. Devil and man and hell have been in league for centuries to try to break the Word of God, but they can not do it. If you get it for your footing, you have good footing for time and eternity. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.” My friends, that Word is going to live, and there is no power in perdition or earth to blot it out.

What we want to-day is men who believe in it from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet, who believe the whole of it, the things they understand and the things they do not understand. Talk about the things you understand, and leave the things you do not. I believe that is one reason why the English and the Scotch Christians have got ahead of us, because they study the whole Bible. I venture to say that there are hundreds of Bible readings in London every night. You know there are a good many Christians who are good in spots and mighty poor in other spots, because they do not take the whole sweep of the Bible. When I went to Scotland I had to be very careful how I quoted the Bible. Some friend would tell me after the meeting I was quoting it wrong.

CHAPTER V.

Fulfilled Prophecy—Unexplored Country—Babylon—Tyre—Jerusalem—Egypt—The Jew.

I KNOW nothing that will upset an honest skeptic quicker than fulfilled prophecy. There are very few Christians who think of studying this subject. They say that prophecies are so mysterious, and there is question about their being fulfilled. Now the Bible does not say that prophecy is a dark subject, to be avoided; but rather that "we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts." Prophecy is history unfulfilled, and history is prophecy fulfilled.

When I was a boy I was taught that all beyond the Mississippi river was the great American desert. But when the first pick-axe struck into the Comstock lode, and they took out more than one hundred million dollars' worth of silver, the nation realized that there was no desert: and to-day that part of the country—Nevada, Colorado, Utah and other western states—is some of the most valuable we possess. Think of the busy cities and flourishing states that have sprung up among the mountains! So with many portions of the Bible: people never think of reading them. They are living on a few verses and chapters. The greater part of the Bible was written by prophets, yet you never hear a sermon preached on prophecy.

Between five and six hundred Old Testament prophecies have been remarkably and literally fulfilled, and two hundred in regard to Jesus Christ alone. Not a thing happened to Jesus Christ that was not prophesied from seventeen hundred to four hundred years before He was born.

Take the four great cities that existed in the days when the Old Testament was written, and you will find that prophecies regarding them have been fulfilled to the letter. Let me call your attention to a few passages.

BABYLON.

First regarding Babylon—"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." And again: "The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the Prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish and set up a standard; publish and conceal not; say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh a nation against her; which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein; they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast." "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues." "How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art taken, oh Babylon, and thou wast not aware; thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord."

A hundred years before Nebucadnezzar ascended the throne, it was foretold how Babylon should be destroyed, and it came to pass. Scholars tell us that the city stood in the midst of a large and fruitful plain. It was enclosed by a wall four hundred and eighty furlongs square. Each side of the square had twenty gates of solid brass, and at every corner was a strong tower, ten feet higher than the wall. The wall was eighty-seven feet broad, and three hundred and fifty feet high. These figures give us an idea of the importance of Babylon. Yet nothing but ruins now remain to tell of its former grandeur. When Babylon was in its glory, the queen of the earth, prophets predicted that it would be destroyed; and how literally was it fulfilled!

A friend going through the valley of the Euphrates tried to get his dragoman to pitch his tent near the ruins, and failed. No Arabian pitches his tent there, no shepherd will dwell near the ruins.

NINEVEH.

Now take Nineveh. "And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her? Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" Now, how are you going to cover the city up? "I will cast upon her abominable filth." How are you going to cast abominable filth upon the city? And yet for 2,500 years Nineveh was buried and an abominable filth lay upon her. But now they have dug up the ruins, and brought them to Paris and London, and you go into the British museum, and there is not a day except the Sabbath but what you can see men from all parts of the world gazing upon the ruins. It is just as the prophets prophesied. For 2,500 years Nineveh was buried, but it is no longer buried.

TYRE.

Then look at Tyre: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Oh Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, and it shall become a spoil to the nations." Coffin, who was correspondent of the Boston Journal during the war, went round the world after the war was over in '68. One night he came to the site of old Tyre, and he said the sun was just going down, and he got his dragoman to pitch his tent right over by the ruins, where the rocks were scraped bare, and he took out his Bible and read where it says, "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets." He said the fishermen had done fishing and were just spreading their nets or the rocks of Tyre, precisely as it was prophesied hundreds and hundreds of years before. Now mark you! When they prophesied against these great cities, they were like London, Paris and New York in their glory, but their glory has gone.

JERUSALEM.

Now take the prophecy in regard to Jerusalem: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it saying, If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace: But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." Didn't Titus do that? Didn't the Roman Emperor do that very thing? "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

I have read of two Rabbis going up to Jerusalem, and they saw a fox playing upon the wall; one began to weep when he thus looked at the desolation of Zion. The other smiled and rebuked him, saying that the spectacle was a proof that the Word of God was true, and that this was one of the prophecies which should be fulfilled—"Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." It was also said that Jerusalem should be as a ploughed field. This prophecy has also been fulfilled. The modern city is so restricted that outside of the walls, where part of the old city stood, the plough has been used.

EGYPT.

Now take the prophecies regarding Egypt: "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations." Now, mark you! Egypt was in its glory when this was prophesied. It was a great and mighty empire, but for centuries it has been the basest of all nations. They have not got a native prince or king to reign over them. The man that is reigning over them now is not an Egyptian, but he is some foreigner, and so it has been.

THE JEWS.

Then, again, the prophecy of Balaam with regard to the Jews has been already greatly fulfilled. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" The Jews were not to be reckoned amongst the nations. There is something in this people's looks and habits that God continues to perpetuate, just, as I believe, to make them witnesses in every land of the truth of the Bible.

The race has remained all these centuries separate and distinct from other nations. In America there are all kinds of nationalities. Take an Irishman, and in a generation he will have forgotten his nationality. So, too, with the Germans, Italians, and French; but the Jew is as much a Jew as he was when he came over one hundred years ago. See how the race has been persecuted, yet the Jews control the finances of the world and can not be kept down. Egypt, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Rome, and all the leading nations of the earth have sought to crush out the Jews. Frederick the Great said, "Touch them not, for no one has done so and prospered." The people are the same now as they were in the days of Pharaoh, when he tried to destroy all the male children. The prophecy is fulfilled—God has made the nation numerous and united. The time is coming when God will reinstate the Jew. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Are they not without a King, without a nation, and without a sacrifice? Are they not scattered among the nations of the earth, a separate and distinct people? and they do not bow down to idols. Their last King they crucified, and they will never have another until they restore Him. He was Jesus Christ, as inscribed upon His cross, "The King of the Jews."

OTHER PROPHECIES.

We see how it was prophesied that Eli should suffer. He was God's own high priest, and the only thing against him was that he did not obey God's word faithfully and diligently. He was like a good many nowadays. He was one of these good-natured old men who don't want to make people uncomfortable by saying unpleasant things, so he let his two boys go on in neglect, and did not restrain them. He was just like some ministers. Oh! let every minister tell the truth, though he preach himself out of his pulpit. Everything went all right for twenty years, but then came fulfilment of the prophecy. God's ark was taken, the army of Israel was routed by the Philistines; Hophni and Phineas, old Eli's two sons, were killed, and when the old man heard of it, he fell back in his chair, broke his neck and died. So with King Ahab, taking the sinful advice of Jezebel. Naboth would not sell him that piece of land, so they got him out of the way. Three years afterwards the dogs licked Ahab's blood from his chariot in the very spot where Naboth's had been murderously shed.

÷CHAPTER VI.

Text Preaching and Expository Preaching—Peter and Paul at Jerusalem—Oratorical Preaching

HERE is a word of counsel for young men who have their eye on the ministry. If you take my advice, you will seek not to be a text preacher, but an expository preacher. I believe that what this country wants is the Word of God. There is no book that will draw the people like the Bible. One of the professors of the Chicago University gave some lectures on the Book of Job, and there was no building large enough to hold the people. If the Bible only has a chance to speak for itself, it will interest the people. I am tired and sick of moral essays. It would take about a ton of them to convert a child five years old. A man was talking of a certain church once, and said he liked it because the preacher never touched on politics and religion—just read nice little essays. Give the people the Word of God. Some men only use the Bible as a text book. They get a text and away they go. They go up in a balloon and talk about astronomy, and then go down and give you a little geology, and next Sunday they go on in the same way, and then they wonder why it is people do not read their Bibles. I used to think Charles Spurgeon was about as good a preacher as I ever knew, but I used to rather hear him expound the Scripture than listen to all his sermons. Why is it that Dr. John Hall has held his audience so long? He opens his Bible and expounds. How was it that Andrew Bonar held his audience in Glasgow? He had a weak voice, people could hardly hear him, yet thirteen hundred people would file into his church twice every Sabbath, and many of them took notes, and they would go home and send his sermons all over the world. It was Dr. Bonar's custom to lead his congregation through the study of the Bible, book by book. There was not a part of the Bible in which he could not find Christ. I preached five months in Glasgow, and there was not a ward or a district in the city in which I did not find the influence of that man.

A REMINISCENCE OF DR. ANDREW BONAR.

I was in London in '84 and a barrister had come down from Edinburgh. He said he went through to Glasgow a few weeks before to spend Sunday, and he was fortunate enough to hear Andrew Bonar. He said he happened to be there the Sunday Dr. Bonar got to that part of the Epistle of Galatians where it says that Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter. "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." He let his imagination roam. He said one day he could imagine they had been very busy and they were tired, and all at once Peter turned to Paul and said, "Paul, wouldn't you like to take a little walk?" And Paul said he would. So they went down through the streets of Jerusalem arm in arm, over the brook Cedron, and all at once Peter stopped and said, "Look, Paul, this is the very spot where He wrestled, and where He suffered and sweat great drops of blood. There is the very spot where John and James fell asleep, right there. And right here is the very spot where I fell asleep. I don't think I should have denied Him if I hadn't gone to sleep, but I was overcome. I remember the last thing I heard Him say before I fell asleep was, 'Father, let this cup pass from me if it is Thy will.' And when I awoke an angel stood right there where you are standing, talking to Him, and I saw great drops of blood come from His pores and trickle down His cheeks. It wasn't long before Judas came to betray Him. And I heard Him say to Judas so kindly, 'Betrayest thou the Master with a kiss?' And then they bound Him and led Him away. That night when He was on trial I denied Him." He pictured the whole scene. And the next day Peter turned again to Paul and said, "Wouldn't you like to take another walk to-day?" And Paul said he would. That day they went to Calvary, and when they got on the hill, Peter said, "Here, Paul this is the very spot where He died for you and me. See that hole right there? That is where His cross stood. The believing thief hung there and the unbelieving thief there on the other side. Mary Magdalene and Mary His mother stood there, and I stood away on the outskirts of the crowd. The night before when I denied Him, He looked at me so lovingly that it broke my heart, and I couldn't bear to get near enough to see Him. That was the darkest hour of my life. I was in hopes that God would intercede and take Him from the cross. I kept listening and I thought I would hear His voice." And he pictured the whole scene, how they drove the spear into His side and put the crown of thorns on His brow, and all that took place.

And the next day Peter turned to Paul again and asked him if he wouldn't like to take another walk. And Paul said he would. Again they passed down the streets of Jerusalem, over the brook Cedron, over Mount Olivet, up to Bethphage, and over on to the slope near Bethany. All at once Peter stopped and said, "Here, Paul, this is the last place where I ever saw Him. I never heard Him speak so sweetly as He did that day. It was right here He delivered His last message to us, and all at once I noticed that His feet didn't touch the ground. He arose and went up. All at once there came a cloud and received Him out of sight. I stood right here gazing up into the heavens, in hopes I might see Him again and hear Him speak. And two men dressed in white dropped down by our sides and stood there and said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand Ye gazing into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'"

My friends, I want to ask you this question: Do you believe that picture is overdrawn? Do you believe Peter had Paul as his guest and didn't take him to Gethsemane, didn't take him to Calvary and to Mount Olivet? I myself spent eight days in Jerusalem, and every morning I wanted to steal down into the garden where my Lord sweat great drops of blood. Every day I climbed Mount Olivet and looked up into the blue sky where He went to His Father. I have no doubt, Peter took Paul out on those three walks. If there had been a man that could have taken me to the very spot where thy Master sweat those great drops of blood, do you think I wouldn't have asked him to take me there? If he could have told me where I could find the spot where my Master's feet last touched this sin-cursed earth and was taken up, do you think I wouldn't have had him show it to me?

ORATORICAL PREACHING.

I know there is a class of people who say that kind of preaching won't do in this country. "People want something oratorical." Well, there is no doubt but that there are some who want to hear oratorical sermons, but they forget them inside of twenty-four hours.

It a good thing for a minister to have the reputation of feeding his people. A man once made an artificial bee, which was so like a real bee that he challenged another man to tell the difference. It made just such a buzzing as the live bee, and looked the same. The other said, "You put an artificial bee and a real bee down there, and I will tell you the difference pretty quickly." He then put a drop of honey on the ground and the live bee went for the honey. It is just so with us. There are a lot of people who profess to be Christians, but they are artificial, and they don't know when you give them honey. The real bees go for honey every time. People can get along without your theories and opinions, "Thus saith the Lord"—that is what we want.07

÷CHAPTER VII.

Reading and Studying—At Family Prayers—A Word in Season—Helpful Questions.

MERELY reading the Bible is not what God wants. Again and again I am exhorted to "search."

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

We must study it thoroughly, and hunt it through, as it were, for some great truth. If a friend were to see me searching about a building, and were to come up and say, "Moody, what are you looking for? have you lost something?" and I answered, "No, I haven't lost anything; I'm not looking for anything particular," I fancy he would just let me go on by myself, and think me very foolish. But if I were to say, "Yes, I have lost a dollar," why, then, I might expect him to help me to find it. Read the Bible, my friends, as if you were seeking for something of value. It is a good deal better to take a single chapter, and spend a month on it, than to read the Bible at random for a month.

I used at one time to read so many chapters a day, and if I did not get through my usual quantity I thought I was getting cold and backsliding. But, mind you, if a man had asked me two hours afterward what I had read, I could not tell him; I had forgotten it nearly all. When I was a boy I used, among other things, to hoe corn on a farm; and I used to hoe it so badly, in order to get over so much ground, that at night I had to put down a stick in the ground, so as to know next morning where I had left off. That was somewhat in the same fashion as running through so many chapters every day. A man will say, "Wife, did I read that chapter?" "Well," says she, "I don't remember." And neither of them can recollect. And perhaps he reads the same chapter over and over again; and they call that "studying the Bible." I do not think there is a book in the world we neglect so much as the Bible.

FAMILY WORSHIP.

Now, when you read the Bible at family worship or for private devotions, look for suitable passages. What would you think of a minister who went into the pulpit on Sunday and opened the Bible at hazard and commenced to read? Yet this is what most men do at family prayers. They might as well go into a drug store and swallow the first medicine their eye happens to see. Children would take more interest in family prayers if the father would take time to search for some passage to suit the special need. For instance, if any member of the family is about to travel, read Psalm 121. In time of trouble, read Psalm 91. When the terrible accident happened to the "Spree" as we were crossing the Atlantic in November, 1892, and when none on board ship expected to live to see the light of another sun, we held a prayer-meeting, at which I read a portion of Psalm 107:

> "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;
> These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.
> For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.
> They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.
> They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.
> Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.
> He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.
> Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
> Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

A lady came to me afterwards and said I made it up to suit the occasion.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS.

I have seen questions that will help one to get good out of every verse and passage of Scripture, They may be used in family worship, or in studying the Sabbath School lesson, or for prayer meeting, or in private reading. It would be a good thing if questions like these were pasted in the front of every Bible:

1. What persons have I read about, and what have I learned about them?
2. What places have I read about, and what have I read about them? If the place is not mentioned, can I find out where it is? Do I know its position on the map?
3. Does the passage refer to any particular time in the history of the children of Israel, or of some leading character?
4. Can I tell from memory what I have just been reading?
5. Are there any parallel passages or texts that throw light on this passage?
6. Have I read anything about God the Father? or about Jesus Christ? or about the Holy Spirit?
7. What have I read about myself? about man's sinful nature? about the spiritual new nature?
8. Is there any duty for me to observe? any example to follow? any promise to lay hold of? any exhortation for my guidance? any prayer that may echo?
9. How is this Scripture profitable for doctrine? for reproof? for correction? for instruction in righteousness?
10. Does it contain the gospel in type or in evidence?
11. What is the key verse of the chapter or passage? Can I repeat it from memory?

CHAPTER VIII.

How to Study the Bible—Feeding one's self—The Best Law—Three Books Every Christian Should Possess—The Bible in the Sabbath School.

SOMEONE has said that there are four things necessary in studying the Bible: Admit, submit, commit and transmit. First, admit its truth; second, submit to its teachings; third, commit it to memory; and fourth, transmit it. If the Christian life is a good thing for you, pass it on to some one else.

Now I want to tell you how I study the Bible. Every man cannot fight in Saul's armor; and perhaps you cannot follow my methods. Still I may be able to throw out some suggestions that will help you. Spurgeon used to prepare his sermon for Sunday morning on Saturday night. If I tried that, I would fail.

FEED YOURSELF.

The quicker you learn to feed yourself the better. I pity down deep in my heart any men or women who have been attending some church or chapel for, say five, ten, or twenty years, and yet have not learned to feed themselves.

You know it is always regarded a great event in the family when a child can feed itself. It is propped up at table, and at first perhaps it uses the spoon upside down, but by and by it uses it all right, and mother, or perhaps sister, claps her hands and says, "Just see, baby's feeding himself!" Well, what we need as Christians is to be able to feed ourselves. How many there are who sit helpless and listless, with open mouths, hungry for spiritual things, and the minister has to try to feed them, while the Bible is a feast prepared, into which they never venture.

There are many who have been Christians for twenty years who have still to be fed with an ecclesiastical spoon. If they happen to have a minister who feeds them, they get on pretty well; but if they have not, they are not fed at all. This is the test as to your being a true child of God—whether you love and feed upon the Word of God. If you go out to your garden and throw down some sawdust, the birds will not take any notice; but if you throw down some crumbs, you will find they will soon sweep down and pick them up. So the true child of God can tell the difference, so to speak, between sawdust and bread. Many so-called Christians are living on the world's sawdust, instead of being nourished by the Bread that cometh down from heaven. Nothing can satisfy the longings of the soul but the Word of the living God.

THE LAW OF PERSEVERANCE.

The best law for Bible study is the law of perseverance. The Psalmist says, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies." Application to the Word will tend to its growth within and its multiplication without. Some people are like express-trains, they skims along so quickly that they see nothing.

I met a lawyer in Chicago who told me he had spent two years in studying up one subject; he was trying to smash a will. He made it his business to read everything on wills he could get. Then he went into court and he talked two days about that will; he was full of it; he could not talk about anything else but wills. That is the way with the Bible—study it and study it, one subject at a time, until you become filled with it.

Read the Bible itself—do not spend all your time on commentaries and helps. If a man spent all his time reading up the chemical constituents of bread and milk, he would soon starve.

THREE BOOKS REQUIRED.

There are three books which I think every Christian ought to possess.

The first, of course, is the Bible. I believe in getting a good Bible, with a good plain print. I have not much love for those little Bibles which you have to hold right under your nose in order to read the print; and if the church happens to be a little dark, you cannot see the print, but it becomes a mere jumble of words. Yes, but some one will say you cannot carry a big Bible in your pocket. Very well, then, carry it under your arm; and if you have to walk five miles, you will just be preaching a sermon five miles long. I have known a man convicted by seeing another carrying his Bible under his arm. You are not ashamed to carry hymn-books and prayer-books, and the Bible is worth all the hymn-books and prayer-books in the world put together. If you get a good Bible you are likely to take better care of it. Suppose you pay ten dollars for a good Bible, the older you grow the more precious it will become to you. But be sure you do not get one so good that you will be afraid to mark it. I don't like gilt-edged Bibles that look as if they had never been used.

Then next I would advise you to get a Cruden's Concordance. I was a Christian about five years before I ever heard of it. A skeptic in Boston got hold of me. I didn't know anything about the Bible and I tried to defend the Bible and Christianity. He made a misquotation and I said it wasn't in the Bible: I hunted for days and days. If I had had a concordance I could have found it at once. It is a good thing for ministers once in a while to tell the people about a good book. You can find any portion or any verse in the Bible by just turning to this concordance.

Thirdly, a Topical Text Book. These books will help you to study the Word of God with profit. If you do not possess them, get them at once; every Christian ought to have them.[1]

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLIES AND THE BIBLE.

I think Sunday school teachers are making a woeful mistake if they don't take the whole Bible into their Sunday school classes. I don't care how young children are, let them understand it is one book, that there are not two books—the Old Testament and the New are all one. Don't let them think that the Old Testament doesn't come to us with the same authority as the New. It is a great thing for a boy or girl to know how to handle the Bible. What is an army good for if they don't know how to handle their swords? I speak very strongly on this, because I know some Sabbath schools that don't have a single Bible in them. They have question books. There are questions and the answers are given just below; so that you don't need to study your lesson. They are splendid things for lazy teachers to bring along into their classes. I have seen them come into the class with a question book, and sometimes they get it wrong side up while they are talking to the class, until they find out their mistake, and then they begin over again. I have seen an examination take place something like this:

"John, who was the first man?"

"Methuselah."

"No; I think not; let me see. No, it is not Methuselah. Can't you guess again?"

"Elijah."

"No."

"Adam."

"That's right, my son; you must have studied your lesson hard."

Now, I would like to know what a boy is going to do with that kind of a teacher, or with that kind of teaching. That is the kind of teaching that is worthless, and brings no result. Now, don't say that I condemn helps. I believe in availing yourself of all the light you can get. What I want you to do, when you come into your classes, is to come prepared to explain the lesson without the use of a concordance. Bring the word of God with you; bring the old Book.

You will often find families where there is a family Bible, but the mother is so afraid that the children will tear it that she keeps it in the spare room, and once in a great while the children are allowed to look at it. The thing that interests them most is the family record—when John was born, when father and mother were married.

I came up to Boston from the country and went into a Bible class where there were a few Harvard students. They handed me a Bible and told me the lesson was in John. I hunted all through the Old Testament for John, but couldn't find it. I saw the fellows hunching one another, "Ah, greenie from the country." Now, you know that is just the time when you don't want to be considered green. The teacher saw my embarrassment and handed me his Bible, and I put my thumb in the place and held on. I didn't lose my place. I said then that if I ever got out of that scrape, I would never be caught there again. Why is it that so many young men from eighteen to twenty cannot be brought into a Bible class? Because they don't want to show their ignorance. There is no place in the world that is so fascinating as a live Bible class. I believe that we are to blame that they have been brought up in the Sunday school without Bibles and brought up with quarterlies. The result is, the boys are growing up without knowing how to handle the Bible. They don't know where Matthew is, they don't know where the Epistle to the Ephesians is, they don't know where to find Hebrews or any of the different books of the Bible. They ought to be taught how to handle the whole Bible, and it can be done by Sunday school teachers taking the Bible into the class and going right about it at once. You can get a Bible in this country for almost a song now. Sunday schools are not so poor that they cannot get Bibles. Some time ago there came up in a large Bible class a question, and they thought they would refer to the Bible, but they found that there was not a single one in the class. A Bible class without a Bible! It would be like a doctor without physic; or an army without weapons. So they went to the pews, but could not find one there. Finally they went to the pulpit and took the pulpit Bible and settled the question. We are making wonderful progress, aren't we? Quarterlies are all right in their places, as helps in studying the lesson, but if they are going to sweep the Bibles out of our Sunday schools, I think we had better sweep them out.

CHAPTER IX.

The Telescopic and Microscopic Methods—Job—The Four Gospels—Acts—Psalm 52:1.

THERE are two opposite ways to study the Bible. One is to study it with a telescope, taking a grand sweep of a whole book and trying to find out God's plan in it; the other, with a microscope, taking up a verse at a time, dissecting it, analyzing it. If you take Genesis, it is the seed-plant of the whole Bible; it tells us of Life, Death, Resurrection; it involves all the rest of the Bible.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

An Englishman once remarked to me: "Mr Moody, did you ever notice this, that the book of Job is the key to the whole Bible? If you understand Job you will understand the entire Bible!" "No," I said, "I don't comprehend that. Job the key to the whole Bible! How do make that out?" He said: "I divide Job into seven heads. The first head is: A perfect man untried. That is what God said about Job; that is Adam in Eden. He was perfect when God put him there. The second head is: Tried by adversity. Job fell, as Adam fell in Eden. The third head is: The wisdom of the world. The world tried to restore Job; the three wise men came to help him. That was the wisdom of the world centred in those three men. You can not," said he, "find any such eloquent language or wisdom anywhere, in any part of the world, as those three men displayed, but they did not know anything about grace, and could not, therefore, help Job." That is just what men are trying to do; and the result is that they fail; the wisdom of man never made man any better. These three men did not help Job; they made him more unhappy. Some one has said the first man took him, and gave him a good pull; then the second and third did the same; the three of them had three good pulls at Job, and then flat down they fell. "Then in the fourth place," said he, "in comes the Daysman, that is Christ. In the fifth place, God speaks; and in the sixth, Job learns his lesson. 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' And then down came Job flat on the dunghill. The seventh head is this, that God restores him." Thank God, it is so with us, and our last state is better than our first.

A friend of mine said to me: "Look here, Moody, God gave to Job double of everything." He would not admit that Job had lost his children; God had taken them to heaven, and He gave Job ten more. So Job had ten in Heaven, and ten on earth—a goodly family. So when our children are taken from us, they are not lost to us, but merely gone before.

Now, let me take you through the four Gospels. Let us begin with Matthew.

MATTHEW.

Men sometimes tell me when I go into a town: "You want to be sure and get such a man on your committee, for he has nothing to do and he will have plenty of time." I say: "No, thank you, I do not want any man that has nothing to do." Christ found Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom. The Lord took some one He found at work, and he went right on working. We do not know much about what he did, except that he wrote this Gospel. But, what a book! Where Matthew came from we do not know, and where he went to we do not know. His old name, Levi, dropped with his old life.

The Key. The Messiah of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. Supposed to have been written about twelve years after the death of Christ, and to be the first Gospel written. It contains the best account of the life of Christ. You notice that it is the last message of God to the Jewish nation. Here we pass from the old to the new dispensation.

Matthew does not speak of Christ's ascension, but leaves Him on earth.

Mark gives His resurrection and ascension.

Luke gives His resurrection, ascension and the promise of a comforter.

John goes a step further and says he is coming back.

There are more quotations in Matthew than in any of the others; I think there are about a hundred. He is trying to convince the Jews that Jesus was the son of David, the rightful king. He talked a good deal about the kingdom, its mysteries, the example of the kingdom, healing the sick, etc., the principles of the kingdom as set forth in the sermon on the mount; also, the rejection of the king. When anyone takes a kingdom they lay down the principles upon which they are going to rule or conduct it.

Now, let me call your attention to five great sermons. In these you have a good sweep of the whole book:

1. The sermon on the mount. See how many things lying all around Him He brings into His sermon, salt, light, candle, coat, rain, closet, moth, rust, thieves, eye, fowls, lilies, grass, dogs, bread, fish, gate, grapes, thorns, figs, thistles, rock, etc.

Someone, in traveling through Palestine, said that he did not think there was a solitary thing there that Christ did not use as an illustration. So many people in these days are afraid to use common things, but don't you think it is better to use things that people can understand, than to talk so that people can't understand you? Now, a woman can easily understand a candle, and a man can easily understand about a rock, especially in a rocky country like Palestine. Christ used common things as illustrations, and spoke so that everyone could understand Him. A woman in Wales once said she knew Christ was Welsh, and an Englishman said, "No, He was a Jew." She declared that she knew He was Welsh, because He spoke so that she could understand Him. Christ did not have a short-hand reporter to go around with Him to write out and print His sermons, and yet the people remembered them. Never mind about finished sentences and rounded periods, but give your attention to making your sermons clear so that they stick. Use bait that your hearers will like.

The Law was given on a mountain, and here Christ lays down His principles on a mountain. The law of Moses applies to the outward acts, but this sermon applies to the inward life. As the sun is brighter than a candle, so the sermon on the mount is brighter than the law of Moses. It tells us what kind of Christians we ought to be—lights in the world, the salt of the world, silent in our actions but great in effect.

"I say unto you," occurs twelve times in this sermon.

2. The second great sermon was delivered to the twelve in the tenth chapter. You find over and over again the sayings in this sermon are quoted by men viz.: "Shake off the dust off your feet against them." "Freely ye have received, freely give," etc.

3. The open air sermon. You want the best kind of preaching on the street. You have to put what you say in a bright, crisp way, if you expect people to listen.

You must learn to think on your feet. There was a young man preaching on the streets in London when an infidel came up and said: "The man who invented gas did more for the world than Jesus Christ." The young man could not answer him and the crowd had the laugh on him. But another man got up and said: "Of course the man has a right to his opinion, and I suppose if he was dying he would send for the gasfitter, but I think I should send for a minister and have him read the fourteenth chapter of John;" and he turned the laugh back on the man.

This sermon contains seven parables. It is like a string of pearls.

4. The sermon of woes; Christ's last appeal to the Jewish nation. Compare these eight woes with the nine beatitudes. You notice the closing up of this sermon on woes is the most pathetic utterance in the whole ministry of Christ. "Your house is left unto you desolate." Up to that time it had been "My Father's house," or "My house," but now it is "your house." It was not long until Titus came and leveled it to the ground. Abraham never loved Isaac more than Jesus loved the Jewish nation. It was hard for Abraham to give up Isaac, but harder for the Son of God to give up Jerusalem.

5. The fifth sermon was preached to His disciples. How little did they understand Him! When His heart was breaking with sorrow, they drew His attention to the buildings of the temple.

The first sermon was given on the mount; the second and third at Capernaum; the fourth in the Temple; the fifth on Olivet.

In Matthew's Gospel there is not a thing in hell, heaven, earth, sea, air or grave that does not testify of Christ as the Son of God. Devils cried out, fish entered the nets under His influence, wind and wave obeyed Him.

Summary:—Nine beatitudes; eight woes; seven consecutive parables; ten consecutive miracles; five continuous sermons; four prophecies of His death.

MARK.

The four Gospels are independent of each other, no one was copied from the other. Each is the complement of the rest, and we get four views of Christ, like the four sides of a house.

Matthew writes for Jews.

Mark writes for Romans.

Luke writes for Gentile converts.

You don't find any long sermons in Mark. The Romans were quick and active, and he had to condense things in order to catch them. You'll find the words "Forthwith," "Straightway," "Immediately," occur forty-one times in this gospel. Every chapter but the first, seventh, eighth and fourteenth begins with "And," as if there was no pause in Christ's ministry.

Luke tells us that Christ received little children, but Mark says He took them up in His arms. That makes it sweeter to you, doesn't it?

Perhaps the high water mark is the fifth chapter. Here we find three very bad cases, devils, disease and death, beyond the reach of man, cured by Christ. The first man was possessed with devils. They could not bind him, or chain or tame him. I suppose a good many men and women had been scared by that man. People are afraid of a graveyard even in daylight, but think of a live man being in the tombs and possessed with devils! He said: "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not." But Jesus had come to do him good.

Next, the woman with the issue of blood. If she had been living to-day, I suppose she would have tried every patent medicine in the market. We would have declared her a hopeless case and sent her to the hospital. Some one has said: "There was more medicine in the hem of His garment than in all the apothecary shops in Palestine." She just touched Him and was made whole. Hundreds of others touched Him, but they did not get anything. Can you tell the difference between the touch of faith and the ordinary touch of the crowd?

Thirdly, Jarius' daughter raised. You see the manifestation of Jesus' power is increasing, for when He arrived the child was dead and He brought her to life. I do not doubt but that away back in the secret councils of eternity it was appointed that He should be there just at that time. I remember once being called to preach a funeral sermon, and looked the four gospels through to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, but do you know He never preached one? He broke up every funeral He ever attended. The dead awaked when they heard His voice.

LUKE.

We now come to Luke's gospel. You notice his name does not occur in this book or in Acts. (You will find it used three times, viz.; in Colossians, Timothy and Philemon). He keeps himself in the background. I meet numbers of Christian workers who are ruined by getting their names up. We do not know whether Luke was a Jew or a Gentile.

The first we see of him is in Acts 16:10 "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." He did not claim to be an eye-witness to Christ's ministry nor one of the seventy. Some think he was, but he does not claim it. It is supposed that his gospel is of Paul's preaching, the same as Mark's, was of Peter. It is also called the Gospel of the Gentiles, and is supposed to have been written when Paul was in Rome, about 27 years after Christ. One-third of this gospel is left out in the other gospels. It opens with a note of praise: "And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at His birth;" "And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God;" and closes the same way.

Canon Farrar has pointed out that we have a seven-fold gospel in Luke:

1. It is a gospel of praise and song. We find here the songs of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, the angels, and others. Some one has written beautifully of Simeon as follows: "What Simeon wanted to see was the Lord's Christ. Unbelief would suggest to him, 'Simeon you are an old man, your day is almost ended, the snow of age is upon your head, your eyes are growing dim, your brow is wrinkled, your limbs totter, and death is almost upon you: and where are the signs of His coming? You are resting, Simeon, upon imagination—it is all a delusion.' 'No,' replied Simeon, 'I shall not see death till I have seen the Lord's Christ; I shall see Him before I die.' I can imagine Simeon walking out one fine morning along one of the lovely vales of Palestine, meditating upon the great subject that filled his mind. Presently he meets a friend: 'Peace be with you; have you heard the strange news? What news?' replies Simeon. 'Do you not know Zacharias the priest?' 'Yes, well.' 'According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense in the temple of the Lord, and the whole multitude of the people were praying without. It was the time of incense, and there appeared unto him an angel, standing on the right side of the altar, who told him that he should have a son, whose name should be called John; one who should be great in the sight of the Lord, who should go before the Messiah and make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The angel was Gabriel who stands in the presence of God, and because Zacharias believed not, he was struck dumb.' 'Oh,' says Simeon, 'that fulfills the prophecy of Malachi. This is the forerunner of the Messiah: this is the morning star: the day dawn is not for off: the Messiah is nigh at hand. Hallelujah! The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple!' Time rolls on. I can imagine Simeon accosted again by one of his neighbors: 'Well, Simeon, have you heard the news?' 'What news?' 'Why there's a singular story in everybody's mouth. A company of shepherds were watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. It was the still hour of night, and darkness mantled the world. Suddenly a bright light shone around the shepherds, a light above the brightness of the midday sun. They looked up, and just above them was an angel who said to the terrified shepherds, Fear not, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people!' 'This is the Lord's Christ,' said Simeon, 'and I shall not taste death till I have seen him.' He said to himself, 'They will bring the child to the Temple to present Him to the Lord.'

Away went Simeon, morning after morning, to see if he could get a glimpse of Jesus. Perhaps unbelief suggested to Simeon, 'You had better stop at home this wet morning: you have been so often and have missed Him: you may venture to be absent this once.' 'No,' said the Spirit, 'go to the Temple.' Simeon would no doubt select a good point of observation. See how intently he watches the door! He surveys the face of every child as one mother after another brings her infant to be presented. 'No,' he says, 'That is not He.' At length he sees the Virgin appear, and the Spirit tells him it is the long-expected Saviour. He grasps the child in his arms, presses him to his heart, blesses God and says: 'Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'"

2. It is a gospel of thanksgiving. They glorified God when Jesus healed the widow's son at Nain, when the blind man received sight, etc.

3. It is a gospel of prayer. We learn that Christ prayed when he was baptised, and nearly every great event in His ministry was preceded by prayer. If you want to hear from Heaven you must seek it on your knees. There are two parables about prayer—the friend at midnight and the unjust judge.

4. Here is another thing that is made prominent, namely, the gospel of womanhood. Luke alone records many loving things Christ did for women. The richest jewel in Christ's crown was what he did for women. A man tried to tell me that Mohammed had done more for women than Christ. I told him that if he had ever been in Mohammedan countries, he would be ashamed of himself for making such a remark. They care more for their donkeys than they do for their wives and mothers.

A man once said that when God created life He began at the lowest forms of animal life and came up until He got to man, then he was not quite satisfied and created a woman. She was lifted up the highest, and when she fell, she fell the lowest.

5. This is the gospel of the poor and humble. When I get a crowd of roughs on the street I generally teach from Luke. Here are the shepherds, the peasant, the incident of the rich man and Lazarus. This gospel tells us He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me—to preach the gospel to the poor." It is a dark day for a church when it gets out that they do not want the common people. Whitfield labored among the miners, and Wesley among the common people. If you want the poor, let it get out that you want them to come.

6. It is a gospel to the lost. The woman with the seven devils, the thief on the cross illustrate this. Also, the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the lost son.

7. It is a gospel of tolerance.

"He that winneth souls is wise." Do you want to win men? Do not drive or scold them. Do not try to tear down their prejudices before you begin to lead them to the truth. Some people think they have to tear down the scaffolding before they begin on the building. An old minister once invited a young brother to preach for him. The latter scolded the people, and when he got home, asked the old minister how he had done. He said he had an old cow, and when he wanted a good supply of milk, he fed the cow; he did not scold her.

Christ reached the publicans because nearly everything he said about them was in their favor. Look at the parable of the Pharisee and publican. Christ said the publican went down to his house justified rather than that proud Pharisee. How did He reach the Samaritans? Take the parable of the ten lepers. Only one returned to thank Him for the healing, and that was a Samaritan. Then there is the parable of the Good Samaritan. It has done more to stir people up to philanthropy and kindness to the poor than anything that has been said on this earth for six thousand years. Go into Samaria and you find that story has reached there first. Some man has been down to Jerusalem and heard it, and gone back home and told it all around; and they say "If that Prophet ever comes up here, we'll give Him a hearty reception." If you want to reach people that do not agree with you, do not take a club to knock them down and then try to pick them up. When Jesus Christ dealt with the erring and the sinners, He was as tender with them as a mother is with her sick child. A child once said to his mother, "Mamma, you never speak ill of any one. You would speak well of Satan." "Well," said the mother, "you might imitate his perseverance."

JOHN.

John was supposed to be the youngest disciple, and was supposed to be the first of all that Christ had to follow Him. He is called the bosom companion of Christ. Someone was complaining of Christ's being partial. I have no doubt that Christ did love John more than the others, but it was because John loved him most. I think John got into the inner circle, and we can get in too if we will. Christ keeps the door open and we can just go right in. You notice nearly all his book is new. All of the eight months Christ spent in Judea are recorded here.

Matthew begins with Abraham; Mark with Malachi; Luke with John the Baptist; but John with God Himself.

Matthew sets forth Christ as the Jew's Messiah.

Mark as the active worker.

Luke as a man.

John as a personal Saviour.

John presents Him as coming from the bosom of the Father. The central thought in this gospel is proving the divinity of Christ. If I wanted to prove to a man that Jesus Christ was divine, I would take him directly to this gospel. The word repent does not occur once, but the word believe occurs ninety-eight times. The controversy that the Jews raised about the divinity of Christ is not settled yet, and before John went away he took his pen and wrote down these things to settle it.

A seven-fold witness to the divinity of Christ:

1. Testimony of the Father. "The Father that sent me beareth witness of me."
2. The Son bearing testimony. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go."
3. Christ's works testify: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."

No man can make me believe that Jesus Christ was a bad man; because He brought forth good fruit. How any one can doubt that He was the Son of God after eighteen centuries of testing is a mystery to me.

4. The Scriptures: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me."
5. John the Baptist: "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."
6. The Disciples: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
7. The Holy Ghost: "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Of course there many others that show His divinity, but I think these are enough to prove it to any man. If I went into court and had seven witnesses that could not be broken down, I think I would have a good case.

Notice the "I am's" of Christ.

"I am from above."

"I am not of this world."

"Before Abraham was, I am."

"I am the bread of life."

"I am the light of the world."

"I am the door."

"I am the Good Shepherd."

"I am the way."

"I am the truth." Pilate asked what truth was, and there it was standing right before him.

"I am the resurrection and the life."

In the gospel of John, we find eight gifts for the believer: the bread of life; the water of life; eternal life; the Holy Spirit; love; joy; peace; His words.

ACTS.

A good lesson to study is how all through the book of Acts defeat was turned to victory. When the early Christians were persecuted, they went every where preaching the Word. That was a victory, and so on all through.

Luke's gospel was taken up with Christ in the body, Acts with Christ in the church. In Luke we read of what Christ did in His humiliation, and in Acts what He did in His exaltation. With most men, their work stops at their death, but with Christ it had only begun. "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father." We call this book the "Acts of the Apostles," but it is really the "Acts of the Church (Christ's body)."

You will find the key to the book in chapter 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

We would not have seen the struggles of that infant church if it had not been for Luke. We would not have known much about Paul either if it had not been for Luke.

There were four rivers flowing out of Eden; here we have the four gospels flowing into one channel.

Three divisions of the Acts:—

I. Founding of the church.

II. Growth of the church.

III. Sending out of missionaries.

I believe that the nearer we keep to the apostles' way of presenting the gospel, the more success we will have.

Now there are ten great sermons in Acts, and I think if you get a good hold on these you will have a pretty good understanding of the book and how to preach. Five were preached by Peter, one by Stephen and four by Paul. The phrase, "We are witnesses," runs through the entire book. We say, to-day, "We are eloquent preachers." We seem to be above being simple witnesses.

I. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Someone said that now it takes about three thousand sermons to convert one Jew, but here three thousand were converted by one sermon. When Peter testified of Christ and bore witness that he had died and had risen again, God honored it, and he will do the same with you.

II. Peter preaches in Solomon's porch. A short sermon, but it did good work. They did not get there till three o'clock, and I believe the Jews could not arrest a man after sundown, and yet in that short space of time five thousand were converted. What did he preach? Listen:

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead: whereof we are witnesses.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

III. Peter preaches to the high priests. They had arrested them and were demanding to know by what power they did these things. "By the name of Jesus Christ, . . . doth this man stand here before you whole." When Bunyan was told he would be released if he would not preach any more, he said, "If you let me out I will preach to-morrow."

IV. Peter's testimony before the council. They commanded them not to preach in the name of Christ. I don't know what they could do if they were forbidden that. Some ministers to-day would have no trouble; they could get along very well. About all the disciples knew was what they had learned in those three years with Jesus, hearing His sermons and seeing His miracles. They saw the things and knew they were so, and when the Holy Ghost came down upon them, they could not help but speak them.

V. Stephen's sermon. He preached the longest sermon in Acts. Dr. Bonar once said, "Did you ever notice, Brother Whittle, that when the Jews accused Stephen of speaking blasphemous words against Moses, the Lord lit up his face with the same glory with which Moses' face shone?"

An old Scotch beadle once warned his new minister, "You may preach as much as ye like about the sins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but stick to them and don't come any nearer hand if ye want to stay here." Stephen began with them, but he came right down to the recent crucifixion, and stirred them up.

VI. Peter's last sermon and the first sermon to the Gentiles. Notice the same gospel is preached to the Gentiles as to the Jews, and it produces the same results. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word."

Now the leading character changes and Paul comes on.

VII. Paul's sermon at Antioch, in Pisidia. An old acquaintance once said to me, "What are you preaching now? I hope you are not harping on that old string yet." Yes, thank God, I am spreading the old gospel. If you want to get people to come to hear you, lift up Christ; He said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

VIII. Paul's sermon to the Athenians. He got fruit at Athens by preaching the same old gospel to the philosophers.

IX. Paul's sermon at Jerusalem.

X. Paul's defence before Agrippa. I think that is the grandest sermon Paul ever preached. He preached the same gospel before Agrippa and Festus that he did down in Jerusalem. He preached everywhere the mighty fact that God gave Christ as a ransom for sin, that the whole world can be saved by trusting in Him.

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles."

THE MICROSCOPIC METHOD.

Let me show what I mean by the microscopic method by taking the first verse of Psalm 52: "Why boastest thou thyself in iniquity, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually." This verse naturally falls into two divisions, on the one side being—man, on the other—God. Man—mischief; God—goodness. Is any particular man addressed? Yes: Doeg the Edomite, as the preface to the psalm suggests. You can therefore find the historic reference of this verse and Psalm in 1 Samuel 22:9. Now take a concordance or topical text-book, and study the subject of "boasting." What words mean the same thing as "boasting"? One is glorifying. Is boasting always condemned? In what does Scripture forbid us to boast? In what are we exhorted to boast? "Thus saith the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this: that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Treat the subject "mischief," in a similar manner. Then ask yourself is this boasting, this mischief, always to last? No: "the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." The other half of the text suggests a study of goodness (or mercy) as an attribute of God. How is it manifested temporally and spiritually? What Scripture have we for it? Is God's goodness conditional? Does God's goodness conflict with His justice? Now, as the end of Bible study as well as of preaching is to save men, ask yourself is the Gospel contained in this text in type or in evidence? Turn to Romans 2:4: "Despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering: not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Here the verse leads directly to the subject of repentance, and you rise from the study of the verse ready at any time to preach a short sermon that may be the means of converting some one.

CHAPTER X.

One Book at a Time—Chapter Study—The Gospel of John.

I KNOW some men who never sit down to read a book until they have time to read the whole of it. When they come to Leviticus or Numbers, or any of the other books, they read it right through at one sitting. They get the whole sweep, and then they begin to study it chapter by chapter. Dean Stanley used to read a book through three separate times: first for the story, second for the thought, and third for the literary style. It is a good thing to take one whole book at a time.

How could you expect to understand a story or a scientific text-book if you read one chapter here and another there?

Dr. A. T. Pierson says: Let the introduction cover five P's; place where written; person by whom written; people to whom written; purpose for which written; period at which written.

Here it is well to grasp the leading points in the chapters. The method is illustrated by the following plan by which I tried to interest the students at Mt. Hermon school and the Northfield Seminary. It provides a way of committing Scripture to memory, so that one can call up a passage to meet the demand whenever it arises. I said to the students one morning at worship: "To-morrow morning when I come I will not read a portion of Scripture, but we will take the first chapter of the Gospel of John and you shall tell me from memory what you find in that chapter and each learn the verse in it that is most precious to you." We went through the Whole book that way and committed a verse or two to memory-out of each one.

I will give the main headings we found in the chapters.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, BY CHAPTERS.

Chapter 1. The call of the first five disciples.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon that John stood and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Two of John's disciples then followed Jesus, and one of them, Andrew, went out and brought his brother Simon. Then Jesus found Philip, as he was starting for Galilee, and Philip found Nathaniel, the skeptical man. When he got sight of Christ his skeptical ideas were all gone. Commit to memory verses 11 and 12: "He came unto his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Key word, Receiving.

Chapter 2. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." We had a good time in this chapter on Obedience, which is the key word.

Chapter 3. This is a chapter on Regeneration. It took us more than one day to get through this one. This gives you a respectable sinner, and how Jesus dealt with him. Commit verse 16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Key word, Believing.

Chapter 4. A disreputable sinner, and how Jesus dealt with her. If we had been dealing with her, we would have told her what Jesus told Nicodemus, but He took her on her own ground. She came for a water-pot of water, and, thank God, she got a whole well full. Key word, Worshipping. Memorize verse 24: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Chapter 5. Divinity of Christ. Commit verse 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Key word, Healing.

Chapter 6. We called that the bread chapter. If you want a good loaf of bread, get into this sixth chapter. You feed upon that bread and you will live forever. Key verse: Christ the bread of life. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Key word, Eating.

Chapter 7 is the water chapter. "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." You have here living water and Christ's invitation to every thirsty soul to come to drink. Key word, Drinking.

Chapter 8. The Light chapter. "I am the light of the world." Key, Walking in the light. But what is the use of having light if you have no eyes to see with, so we go on to

Chapter 9. The Sight chapter. There was a man born blind and Christ made him to see. Key word, Testifying. Memory verse: "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

Chapter 10. Here you find the Good Shepherd. Commit to memory verse 11: "I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Key word, Safety.

Chapter 11. The Lazarus chapter. Memorize verse 25: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Key word, Resurrection.

Chapter 12. Verse 32: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Here Christ closes up his ministry to the Jewish nation. Key word, Salvation for all.

Chapter 13. The Humility chapter. Christ washing the feet of his disciples. Learn verse 34: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Key word, Teaching.

Chapter 14. The Mansion chapter. Commit to memory verse 6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Key words, Peace and comfort.

Chapter 15. The Fruit chapter. The vine can only bear fruit through the branches. Verse 5: "I am the vine; ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." Key word, Joy.

Chapter 16. The promise of the Holy Ghost. Here you find the secret of Power, which is the key word.

Chapter 17. This chapter contains what is properly the "Lord's prayer." Learn verse 15: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Key word, Separation.

Chapter 18. Christ is arrested.

Chapter 19. Christ is crucified.

Chapter 20. Christ rises from the dead.

Chapter 21. Christ spends some time with his disciples again, and invites them to dine with him.

÷CHAPTER XI.

Study of Types—Types of Christ—Leprosy a Type of Sin—Bible Characters—Meaning of Names.

ANOTHER way of studying is to take five great divisions—History, Type, Prophecy, Miracle, Parable.

It is a very interesting thing to study the types of the Bible. Get a good book on the subject and you will be surprised to find out how interested you will become. The Bible is full of patterns and types of ourselves. That is a popular objection against the Bible—that it tells about the failings of men. We should, however, remember that the object of the Bible is not to tell how good men are, but how bad men can become good. But more especially the Bible is full of types of Christ. Types are foreshadowings, and wherever there is a shadow there must be substance. As John McNeill says, "If I see the shadow of a dog, I know there's a dog around." God seems to have chosen this means of teaching the Israelites of the promised Messiah. All the laws, ceremonies and institutions of the Mosaic dispensation point to Christ and His dispensation. The enlightened eyes see Christ in all. For instance, the tabernacle was a type of the incarnation of Jesus; John 1:14, "and the word was made flesh, and tabernacled amongst us." The laver typified sanctification or purity: Ephesians 5:26, "that he might sanctify and cleanse the Church with the washing of water by the word." The candlesticks typified Christ as the Light of the world. The shewbread typified Christ as the Bread of Life. The High Priest was always a type of Christ. Christ was called of God, as was Aaron; He ever liveth to make intercession; He was consecrated with an oath, and so on. The Passover, the Day of Atonement, the Smitten Rock, the sacrifices, the City of Refuge, the Brazen Serpent—all point to Christ's atoning work. Adam was a beautiful type. Think of the two Adams. One introduced sin and ruin into the world, and the other abolished it. So Cain stands as the representative natural man, and Abel as the spiritual man. Abel as a shepherd is a type of Christ the heavenly Shepherd. There is no more beautiful type of Christ in the Bible than Joseph. He was hated of his brethren; he was stripped of his coat; he was sold; he was imprisoned; he gained favor; he had a gold chain about his neck; every knee bowed before him. A comparison of the lives of Joseph and Jesus shows a startling similarity in their experience.

The disease of leprosy is a type of sin. It is incurable by man; it works baneful results; it is insidious in its nature, and from a small beginning works complete ruin; it separates its victims from their fellow-men, just as sin separates a man from God; and as Christ had power to cleanse the leper, so by the grace of God His blood cleanseth us from all iniquity.

Adam represents man's innate sinfulness.
Abel represents Atonement.
Enoch represents communion.
Noah represents Regeneration.
Abraham represents Faith.
Isaac represents Sonship.
Jacob represents Discipline and Service.
Joseph represents Glory through suffering.

BIBLE CHARACTERS.

Another good way is to study Bible characters—take them right from the cradle to the grave. You find that skeptics often take one particular part of a man's life—say, of the life of Jacob or of David—and judge the whole by that. They say these men were queer saints; and yet God did not punish them. If you go right through these men's lives you will find that God did punish them, according to the sins they committed.

A lady once said to me that she had trouble in reading the Bible, that she seemed to not feel the interest she ought. If you don't keep up your interest in one way, try another. Never think you have to read the Bible by courses.

PROPER NAMES.

Another interesting study is the meaning of proper names. I need hardly remark that every name in the Bible, especially Hebrew names, has a meaning of its own. Notice the difference between Abram (a high father), and Abraham (father of a multitude), and you have a key to his life. Another example is Jacob (supplanter), and Israel (Prince of God). The names of Job's three daughters were Jemima (a dove), Kezia (cassia), and Keren-happuch (horn of paint). These names signify beauty; so that Job's leprosy left no taint.

÷CHAPTER XII.

Study of Subjects—Love—Sanctification—Faith—Justification—Atonement —Conversion—Heaven—Revivals—Separation—Grace—Prayer—Assurance —God's Promises.

I FIND some people now and then who boast that they have read the Bible through in so many months. Others read the Bible chapter by chapter, and get through it in a year; but I think it would be almost better to spend a year over one book. If I were going into a court of justice, and wanted to carry the jury with me, I should get every witness I could to testify to the one point on which I wanted to convince the jury. I would not get them to testify to everything, but just to that one thing. And so it should be with the Scriptures.

I took up that word "Love" and I do not know how many weeks I spent in studying the passages in which it occurs, till at last I could not help loving people. I had been feeding so long on Love that I was anxious to do everybody good I came in contact with.

Take Sanctification. I would rather take my concordance and gather passages on sanctification and sit down for four or five days and study them than have men tell me about it.

I suppose that if all the time that I have prayed for Faith was put together, it would be months. I used to say when I was President of the Young Men's Christian Association in Chicago, "What we want is faith; if we only have faith, we can turn Chicago upside down"—or rather, right side up. I thought that some day faith was going to come down, and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible, and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since.

Take the doctrine that made Martin Luther such a power, Justification—"The just shall live by faith." When that thought flashed through Martin Luther's mind as he was ascending the Scala Santa on his knees (although some people deny the truth of this statement), he rose and went forth to be a power among the nations of the earth. Justification puts a man before God as if he had never sinned; he stands before God like Jesus Christ.

Thank God, in Jesus Christ we can be perfect, but there is no perfection out of Him. God looks in His ledger, and says, "Moody, your debts have all been paid by Another; there is nothing against you."

In New England there is perhaps no doctrine assailed so much as the Atonement. The Atonement is foreshadowed in the garden of Eden; there is the innocent suffering for the guilty, the animals slain for Adam's sin. We find it in Abraham's day, in Moses' day; all through the books of Moses and the prophets. Look at the fifty-third of Isaiah, and at the prophecy of Daniel. Then we come into the Gospels, and Christ says, "I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."

CONVERSION.

People talk about Conversion—what is conversion? The best way to find out is from the Bible. A good many don't believe in sudden conversions. You can die in a moment. Can't you receive life in a moment?

When Mr. Sankey and myself were in one place in Europe a man preached a sermon against the pernicious doctrines that we were going to preach, one of which was sudden conversion. He said conversion was a matter of time and growth. Do you know what I do when any man preaches against the doctrines I preach? I go to the Bible and find out what it says, and if I am right I give them more of the same kind. I preached more on sudden conversion in that town than in any town I was in in my life. I would like to know how long it took the Lord to convert Zaccheus? How long did it take the Lord to convert that woman whom He met at the well of Sychar? How long to convert that adulterous woman in the temple, who was caught in the very act of adultery? How long to convert that woman who anointed His feet and wiped them with the hairs of her head? Didn't she go with the word of God ringing in her ears, "Go in peace"?

There was no sign of Zaccheus being converted when he went up that sycamore tree, and he was converted when he came down, so he must have been converted between the branch and the ground. Pretty sudden work, wasn't it? But you say, "That is because Christ was there." Friends, they were converted a good deal faster after He went away than when He was here. Peter preached, and three thousand were converted in one day. Another time, after three o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John healed a man at the gate of the Temple, and then went in and preached, and five thousand were added to the church before night, and Jews at that. That was rather sudden work. Professor Drummond describes a man going into one of our after-meetings and saying he wants to become a Christian. "Well, my friend, what is the trouble?" He doesn't like to tell. He is greatly agitated. Finally he says, "The fact is, I have overdrawn my account"—a polite way of saying he has been stealing. "Did you take your employer's money?" "Yes." "How much?" "I don't know. I never kept account of it." "Well, you have an idea you stole $1,500 last year?" "I am afraid it is that much." "Now, look here, sir, I don't believe in sudden work; don't you steal more than a thousand dollars this next year, and the next year not more than five hundred, and in the course of the next few years you will get so that you won't steal any. If your employer catches you, tell him you are being converted; and you will get so that you won't steal any by and by." My friends, the thing is a perfect farce. "Let him that stole, steal no more," that is what the Bible says. It is right about face.

Take another illustration. Here comes a man and he admits that he gets drunk every week. That man comes to a meeting and he wants to be converted. I say, "Don't you be in a hurry. I believe in doing the work gradually. Don't you get drunk and knock your wife down more than once a month." Wouldn't it be refreshing to your wife to go a whole month without being knocked down? Once a month, only twelve times in a year! Wouldn't she be glad to have you converted in this new way! Only get drunk after a few years on the anniversary of your wedding, and at Christmas; and then it will be effective because it is gradual. Oh! I detest, all that kind of teaching. Let us go to the Bible and see what that old Book teaches. Let us believe it, and go and act as if we believed it, too. Salvation is instantaneous. I admit that a man may be converted so that he can not tell when he crossed the line between death and life, but I also believe a man may be a thief one moment and a saint the next. I believe a man may be as vile as hell itself one moment, and be saved the next.

Christian growth is gradual, just as physical growth is; but a man passes from death unto everlasting life quick as an act of the mind—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

People say they want to become heavenly-minded. Well, read about heaven and talk about it. I once preached on "Heaven," and after the meeting a lady came to me and said, "Why, Mr. Moody, I didn't know there were so many verses in the Bible about heaven." And I hadn't taken one out of a hundred. She was amazed that there was so much in the Bible about heaven.

When you are away from home, how you look for news! You skip everything in the daily paper until your eye catches the name of your own town or country. Now the Christian's home is in heaven. The Scriptures contain our title-deeds to everything we shall be worth when we die. If a will has your name in it, it is no longer a dry document. Why, then, do not Christians take more interest in the Bible?

Then, again, people say thy don't believe in revivals. There's not a denomination in the world that didn't spring from a revival. There are the Catholic and Episcopal churches claiming to be the apostolic churches and to have sprung from Pentecost; the Lutheran from Martin Luther, and so on. They all sprung out of revivals, and yet people talk against revivals! I'd as soon talk against my mother as against a revival. Wasn't the country revived under John the Baptist? Wasn't it under Christ's teachings? People think that because a number of superficial cases of conversion occur at revivals that therefore revivals ought to be avoided. They forget the parable of the sower, where Jesus himself warns us of emotional hearers, who receive the word with joy, but soon fall away. If only one out of every four hearers is truly converted, as in the parable, the revival has done good.

Suppose you spend a month on Regeneration, or The Kingdom of God, or The Church in the New Testament, or the divinity of Christ or the attributes of God. It will help you in your own spiritual life, and you will become a workman who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Make a study of the Holy Spirit. There are probably five hundred passages on the Holy Spirit, and what you want is to study this subject for yourself. Take the Return of our Lord. I know it is a controverted subject. Some say He is to come at the end of the Millennium, others say this side of the Millennium. What we want is to know what the Bible says. Why not go to the Bible and study it up for yourself; it will be worth more to you than anything you get from anyone else. Then Separation. I believe that a Christian man should lead a separated life. The line between the church and the world is almost obliterated to-day. I have no sympathy with the idea that you must hunt up an old musty church record in order to find out whether a man is a member of the church or not. A man ought to live so that everybody will know he is a Christian. The Bible tells us to lead a separate life. You may lose influence, but you will gain it at the same time. I suppose Daniel was the most unpopular man in Babylon at a certain time, but, thank God, he has outlived all the other men of his time. Who were the chief men of Babylon? When God wanted any work done in Babylon, He knew where to find some one to do it. You can be in the world, but not of it. Christ didn't take His disciples out of the world, but He prayed that they might be kept from evil. A ship in the water is all right, but when the water gets into the ship, then look out. A worldly Christian is just like a wrecked vessel at sea.

I remember once I took up the grace of God. I didn't know the difference between law and grace. When that truth dawned upon me and I saw the difference, I studied the whole week on grace and I got so filled that I couldn't stay in the house. I said to the first man I met, "Do you know anything about the grace of God?" He thought I was a lunatic. And I just poured out for about an hour on the grace of God.

Study the subject of Prayer. "For real business at the mercy seat," says Spurgeon, "give me a homemade prayer, a prayer that comes out of the depths of your heart, not because you invented it, but because the Holy Spirit put it there. Though your words are broken and your sentences disconnected, God will hear you. Perhaps you can pray better without words than with them. There are prayers that break the backs of words; they are too heavy for any human language to carry."

Some people say, "I do not believe in Assurance." I never knew anybody who read their Bibles who did not believe in Assurance. This Book teaches nothing else. Paul says, "I know in whom I have believed." Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It is not "I hope," "I trust."

The best book on Assurance was written by one called "John," at the back part of the Bible. He wrote an epistle on this subject. Sometimes you just get a word that will be a sort of key to the epistle, and which unfolds it. Now if you turn to John 20:31, you will find it says, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." Then if you turn to 1 John 5:13, you will read thus: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." That whole epistle is written on assurance. I have no doubt John had found some people who questioned about assurance and doubted whether they were saved or not, and he took up his pen and said, "I will settle that question;" and he wrote that last verse in the twentieth chapter of his gospel.

I have heard some people say that it was not their privilege to know that they were saved; they had heard the minister say that no one could know whether they were saved or not; and they took what the minister said, instead of what the Word of God said. Others read the Bible to make it fit in and prove their favorite creed or notions; and if it does not do so, they will not read it. It has been well said that we must not read the Bible by the blue light of Presbyterianism; nor by the red light of Methodism; nor by the violet light of Episcopalianism; but by the light of the Spirit of God. If you will take up your Bible and study "assurance" for a week, you will soon see it is your privilege to know that you are a child of God.

Then take the promises of God. Let a man feed for a month on the promises of God, and he will not talk about his poverty, and how downcast he is, and what trouble he has day by day. You hear people say, "Oh, my leanness! how lean I am!" My friends, it is not their leanness, it is their laziness. If you would only go from Genesis to Revelation, and see all the promises made by God to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to the Jews and the Gentiles, and to all His people everywhere; if you would spend a month feeding on the precious promises of God, you would not go about with your heads hanging down like bulrushes complaining how poor you are; but you would lift up your heads with confidence and proclaim the riches of His grace, because you could not help it. After the Chicago fire a man came up to me and said in a sympathizing tone, "I understand you lost everything, Moody, in the Chicago fire." "Well, then," said I, "some one has misinformed you." "Indeed! Why I was certainly told you had lost all." "No; it is a mistake," I said, "quite a mistake." "Have you got much left, then?" asked my friend. "Yes," I replied, "I have got much more left than I lost; though I can not tell how much I have lost." "Well, I am glad of it, Moody; I did not know you were that rich before the fire." "Yes," said I, "I am a good deal richer than you could conceive; and here is my title-deed, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things.'" They say the Rothschilds can not tell how much they are worth; and that is just my case. All things in the world are mine; I am joint heir with Jesus the Son of God. Some one has said, "God makes a promise; Faith believes it; Hope anticipates it; and Patience quietly awaits it."

CHAPTER XIII.

Word Study—"Blesseds" of Revelation—"Believings" of John—"The Fear of the Lord" of Proverbs—Key Words.

ANOTHER way to study the Bible is to take one word and follow it up with the help of a concordance.

Or take just one word that runs through a book. Some time ago I was wonderfully blessed by taking the seven "Blesseds" of the Revelation. If God did not wish us to understand the book of Revelation, He would not have given it to us at all. A good many say it is so dark and mysterious that common readers cannot understand it. Let us only keep digging away at it, and it will unfold itself by and by. Some one says it is the only book in the Bible that tells about the devil being chained; and as the devil knows that, he goes up and down Christendom and says, "It is no use your reading Revelation, you can not understand the book; it is too hard for you." The fact is, he does not want you to understand about his own defeat. Just look at the blessings the book contains:

1. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."
2. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. . . . . Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors."
3. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments."
4. "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."
5. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
6. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
7. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Or you may take the eight "overcomes" in Revelation; and you will be wonderfully blessed by them. They take you right up to the throne of heaven; you climb by them to the throne of God.

I have been greatly blessed by going through the "believings" of John. Every chapter but two speaks of believing. As I said before, he wrote his gospel that we might believe. All through it is "Believe! Believe!" If you want to persuade a man that Christ is the Son of God, John's gospel is the book for him.

Take the six "precious" things in Peter's Epistles. And the seven "walks" of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And the five "much mores" of Romans V. Or the two "receiveds" of John I. Or the seven "hearts" in Proverbs XXIII, and especially an eighth. Or "the fear of the Lord" in Proverbs:—

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.
The fear of the Lord prolongeth days.
In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of Life.
Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.
The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom.
By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.
The fear of the Lord tendeth to life.
By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life.
Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."

KEY WORDS.

A friend gave me some key words recently. He said Peter wrote about Hope: "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear." The keynote of Paul's writings seemed to be Faith, and that of John's, Love. "Faith, hope and charity," these were the characteristics of the three men, the key-notes to the whole of their teachings. James wrote of Good Works, and Jude of Apostasy.

In the general epistles of Paul some one suggested the phrase "in Christ." In the book of Romans we find justification by faith in Christ. Corinthians presents sanctification in Christ. The book of Galatians, adoption or liberty in Christ. Ephesians presents fulness in Christ. Philippians, consolation in Christ. In Colossians we have completeness in Christ. Thessalonians gives us hope in Christ.

Different systems of key words are published by Bible scholars, and it is a good thing for every one to know one system or other.

CHAPTER XIV.

Bible Marking—Borrowing and Lending Bibles—Necessity of Marking—Advantages—How to Mark and What to Mark—Taking Notes—"Four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise"—"Every eye shall see Him"—Additional Examples—Suggestions.

DON'T be afraid to borrow and lend Bibles. Some time ago a man wanted to take my Bible home to get a few things out of it, and when it came back I found this noted in it:

Justification, a change of state, a new standing before God.
Repentance, a change of mind, a new mind about God.
Regeneration, a change of nature, a new heart from God.
Conversion, a change of life, a new life for God.
Adoption, a change of family, new relationship towards God.
Sanctification, a change of service, separation unto God.
Glorification, a new state, a new condition with God.

In the same hand-writing I found these lines:

Jesus only; the light of heaven is the face of Jesus.
The joy of heaven is the presence of Jesus.
The melody of heaven is the name of Jesus.
The theme of heaven is the work of Jesus.
The employment of heaven is the service of Jesus.
The fulness of heaven is Jesus himself.
The duration of heaven is the eternity of Jesus.

BIBLE MARKING: ITS NECESSITY.

An old writer said that some books are to be tasted, some to be swallowed, and some to be chewed and digested. The Bible is one that you can never exhaust. It is like a bottomless well: you can always find fresh truths gushing forth from its pages.

Hence the great fascination of constant and earnest Bible study. Hence also the necessity of marking your Bible. Unless you have an uncommon memory, you cannot retain the good things you hear. If you trust to your ear alone, they will escape you in a day or two; but if you mark your Bible and enlist the aid of your eye, you will never lose them. The same applies to what you read.

ITS ADVANTAGES.

Bible marking should be made the servant of the memory. If properly done, it sharpens the memory; rather than blunts it, because it gives prominence to certain things that catch the eye, which by constant reading you get to learn of by heart.

It helps you to locate texts.

It saves you the trouble of writing out notes of your addresses. Once in the margin, always ready.

I have carried one Bible with me a great many years. It is worth a good deal to me, and I will tell you why; because I have so many passages marked in it, that if I am called upon to speak at any time I am ready. I have little words marked in the margin, and they are a sermon to me. Whether I speak about Faith, Hope, Charity, Assurance, or any subject whatever, it all comes back to me; and however unexpectedly I am called upon to preach, I am always ready. Every child of God ought to be like a soldier, and always hold himself in readiness. If the Queen of England's army were ordered to India to-morrow, the soldier is ready for the journey. But we can not be ready if we do not study the Bible. So whenever you hear a good thing, just put it down, because if it is good for you it will be good for somebody else; and we should pass the coin of heaven around just as we do the coin of the realm.

People tell me they have nothing to say. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Get full of Scripture and then you can't help but say it. It says itself. Keep the world out of your heart by getting full of something else. A man tried to build a flying machine. He made some wings and filled them with gas. He said he couldn't quite fly, but the gas was lighter than the air and it helped him over lots of obstructions. So when you get these heavenly truths, they are lighter than the air down here and help you over trouble.

Bible marking makes the Bible a new book to you. If there was a white birch tree within a quarter of a mile of the home of your boyhood, you would remember it all your life. Mark your Bible, and instead of its being dry and uninteresting, it will become a beautiful book to you. What you see makes a more lasting impression on your memory than what you hear.

HOW TO MARK AND WHAT TO MARK.

There are many methods of marking. Some use six or eight colored inks or pencils. Black is used to mark texts that refer to sin; red, all references to the cross; blue, all references to heaven; and so on. Others invent symbols. When there is any reference to the cross, they put "+" in the margin. Some write "G", meaning the Gospel.

There is danger of overdoing this and making your marks more prominent than the scripture itself. If the system is complicated it becomes a burden, and you are likely to get confused. It is easier to remember the text than the meaning of your marks.

Black ink is good enough for all purposes. I use no other, unless it be red ink to draw attention to "the blood."

The simplest way to mark is to underline the words or to make a stroke alongside the verse. Another good way is to go over the printed letters with your pen, and make them thicker. The word will then stand out like heavier type. Mark "only" in Psalm 62 in this way.

When any word or phrase is oft repeated in a chapter or book, put consecutive numbers in the margin over against the text. Thus, in the second chapter of Habakkuk, we find five "woes" against five common sins; (1) verse 6, (2) verse 9, (3) verse 12, (4) verse 15, (5) verse 19. Number the ten plagues in this way. When there is a succession of promises or charges in a verse, it is better to write the numbers small at the beginning of each separate promise. Thus, there is a seven-fold promise to Abraham in Gen. 12, 2-3: "(1) I will make of thee a great nation, (2) and I will bless thee, (3) and make thy name great; (4) and thou shalt be a blessing; (5) and I will bless them that bless thee, (6) and curse him that curseth thee: (7) and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." In Prov. 1, 22, we have (1) simple ones, (2) scorners, (3) fools.

Put a "x" in the margin against things not generally observed: for example, the laws regarding women wearing men's clothes, and regarding bird-nesting, in Deut. 22, 5-6; the sleep of the poor man and of the rich man compared, Ecc. 5, 12.

I also find it helpful to mark: 1. cross-references. Opposite Gen. 1, 1, write "Through faith, Heb. 11, 3"—because there we read—"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Opposite Gen. 28, 12, write—"An answer to prayer, Gen. 35, 3." Opposite Matt. 6, 33, write "1 Kings 3, 13" and "Lu. 10, 42," which give illustrations of seeking the kingdom of God first. Opposite Gen. 37, 7, write—"Gen. 50, 18"—which is the fulfilment of the dream.

2. Railroad connections, that is, connections made by fine lines running across the page. In Daniel 6, connect "will deliver" (v. 16), "able to deliver" (v. 20), and "hath delivered" (v. 27). In Ps. 66, connect "come and see" (v. 5) with "come and hear" (v. 16).

3. Variations of the Revised Version: thus Romans 8, 26 reads—"the Spirit Himself" in the R. V., not "itself." Note also marginal readings like Mark 6, 19, "an inward grudge" instead of "a quarrel."

4. Words that have changed their meaning; "meal" for "meat" in Leviticus. Or where you can explain a difficulty: "above" for "upon" in Num. 11, 31. Or where the English does not bring out the full meaning of the original as happens in the names of God: "Elohim" in Gen. 1, 1, "Jehovah Elohim" in Gen. 2, 4, "El Shaddai" in Gen. 17, 1, and so on.

5. Unfortunate divisions of chapters. The last verse of John 7 reads—"And every man went unto his own house." Chapter 8 begins "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." There ought to be no division of chapters here.

6. At the beginning of every book write a short summary of its contents, something like the summary given in some Bibles at the head of every chapter.

7. Key words and key verses.

8. Make a note of any text that marks a religious crisis in your life. I once heard Rev. F. B. Meyer preach on 1 Cor. 1, 9, and he asked his hearers to write on their Bibles that they were that day "called unto the fellowship of His Son Christ our Lord."

TAKING NOTES.

When a preacher gives out a text, mark it; as he goes on preaching, put a few words in the margin, key-words that shall bring back the whole sermon again. By that plan of making a few marginal notes, I can remember sermons I heard years and years ago. Every man ought to take down some of the preacher's words and ideas, and go into some lane or by-way, and preach them again to others. We ought to have four ears—two for ourselves and two for other people. Then, if you are in a new town, and have nothing else to say, jump up and say: "I heard someone say so and so;" and men will always be glad to hear you if you give them heavenly food. The world is perishing for lack of it.

Some years ago I heard an Englishman in Chicago preach from a curious text: "There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise." "Well," said I to myself, "what will you make of these 'little things'? I have seen them a good many times." Then he went on speaking: "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." He said God's people are like the ants. "Well," I thought, "I have seen a good many of them, but I never saw one like me." "They are like the ants," he said, "because they are laying up treasure in heaven, and preparing for the future; but the world rushes madly on, and forgets all about God's command to lay up for ourselves incorruptible treasures."

"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make these their houses in the rocks." He said, "The conies are very weak things; if you were to throw a stick at one of them you could kill it; but they are very wise, for they build their houses in rocks, where they are out of harm's way. And God's people are very wise, although very feeble; for they build on the Rock of Ages, and that Rock is Christ." "Well," I said, "I am certainly like the conies."

Then came the next verse: "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." I wondered what he was going to make of that. "Now God's people," he said, "have no king down here. The world said, 'Caesar is our king;' but he is not our King; our King is the Lord of Hosts. The locusts went out by bands; so do God's people. Here is a Presbyterian band, here an Episcopalian band, here a Methodist band, and so on; but by and by the great King will come and catch up all these separate bands, and they will all be one; one fold and one Shepherd." And when I heard that explanation, I said; "I would be like the locusts." I have become so sick, my friends, of this miserable sectarianism, that I wish it could all be swept away.

"Well," he went on again, "the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces." When he got to the spider, I said, "I don't like that at all; I don't like the idea of being compared to a spider." "But," he said, "If you go into a king's palace, there is the spider hanging on his gossamer web, and look-down with scorn and contempt on the gilded salon; he is laying hold of things above. And so every child of God ought to be like the spider, and lay hold of the unseen things of God. You see, then, my brethren, we who are God's people are like the ants, the conies, the locusts, and the spiders, little things, but exceeding wise." I put that down in the margin of my bible, and the recollection of it does me as much good now as when I first heard it.

A friend of mine was in Edinburgh and he heard one of the leading Scotch Presbyterian ministers. He had been preaching from the text, "Every eye shall see Him," and he closed up by saying: "Yes, every eye. Adam will see Him, and when he does he will say: 'This is He who was promised to me in that dark day when I fell;' Abraham will see Him and will say: 'This is He whom I saw afar off; but now face to face;' Mary will see Him, and she will sing with new interest that magnificat. And I, too, shall see Him, and when I do, I will sing: 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.'"

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES.

Turn to Exodus 6:6-7-8. In these verses we find seven "I wills."

I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians.
I will rid you out of their bondage.
I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm.
I will take you to me for a people.
I will be to you a God.
I will bring you in into the land [of Canaan].
I will give it to you for a heritage.

Again: Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Mark what God says:

He is with His servant.
He is his God.

He will strengthen.
He will help.
He will uphold.

Again: Psalm 103:2: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” If you can not remember them all, remember what you can. In the next three verses there are five things:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.
Who healeth all thy diseases.
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things.

We can learn some things about the mercy of the Lord from this same Psalm:

v. 4.—Its quality, “tender.”
v. 8.—Its measure, “plenteous.”
v. 11.—Its magnitude, “great,” “according to the height of the heaven above the earth.” See margin.
v. 17.—Its duration, “from everlasting to everlasting.”

Twenty-third Psalm. I suppose I have heard as many good sermons on the twenty-third Psalm as on any other six verses in the Bible. I wish I had begun to take notes upon them years ago when I heard the first one. Things slip away from you when you get to be fifty years of age. Young men had better go into training at once.

With me, the Lord.
Beneath me, green pastures.
Beside me, still waters.
Before me, a table.
Around me, mine enemies.
After me, goodness and mercy.
Ahead of me, the house of the Lord.

“Blessed is the day,” says an old divine, “when Psalm twenty-three was born!” It has been more used than almost any other passage in the Bible.

v. 1.—A happy life.
v. 4.—A happy death.
v. 6.—A happy eternity.

Take Psalm 102:6-7: “I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop.” It seems strange until you reflect that a pelican carries its food with it, that the owl keeps its eyes open at night, and that the sparrow watches alone. So the Christian must carry his food with him—the Bible—and he must keep his eyes open and watch alone.

Turn to Isaiah 32, and mark four things that God promises in verse 2: “And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” There we have:—

The hiding place from danger.
The cover from the tempest.
Rivers of water.
The Rock of Ages.

In the third and fourth verses of the same chapter: “And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.” We have eyes, ears, heart and tongue, all ready to pay homage to the King of Righteousness.

Now turn into the New Testament, John 4:47-53.

The noble heard about Jesus.
went unto Him.
besought Him.
believed Him.
knew that his prayer was answered.

Again: Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Someone has said these verses contain the only description we have of Christ’s heart.

Something to do, come unto Jesus.
Something to leave, your burden.
Something to take, His yoke.
Something to find, rest unto your soul.

Again: John 14:6. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

The way, follow me.
The truth, learn of me.
The life, abide in me.

SUGGESTIONS.

Do not buy a Bible that you are unwilling to mark and use. An interleaved Bible gives more room for notes.

Be precise and concise: for example, Neh. 13, 18: “A warning from history.”

Never mark anything because you saw it in some one else’s Bible. If it does not come home to you, if you not understand it, do not put it down.

Never pass a nugget by without trying to grasp it. Then mark it down.

CHAPTER XV.

Personal Work—Three Kinds of Church Services—Church Members—Individual Experience—One Inquirer at a Time—Those who lack Assurance—Backsliders—Not Convicted of Sin—Deeply Convicted—The Divinity of Christ—Can’t Hold Out—No Strength—Feelings—Can’t Believe—Can’t be Saved all at Once—Not Now—Further Suggestions.

PERSONAL dealing is of the most vital importance. No one can tell how many persons have been lost to the Kingdom of God through lack of following up the preaching of the Gospel by personal work. It is deplorable how few church-members are qualified to deal with inquirers, yet that is the very work in which they ought most efficiently to aid the pastor. People are not usually converted under the preaching of the minister. It is in the inquiry-meeting that they are most likely to be brought to Christ. They are perhaps awakened under the minister, but God generally uses some one person to point out the way of salvation and bring the anxious to a decision. Some people can’t see the use of inquiry-meetings, and think they are something new, and that we haven’t any authority for them. But they are no innovation. We read about them all through the Bible. When John the Baptist was preaching he was interrupted. It would be a good thing if people would interrupt the minister now and then in the middle of some metaphysical sermon, and ask what he means. The only way to make sure that people understand what he is talking about is to let them ask questions. I don’t know what some men, who have got the whole address written out, would do if some one should get up and ask: “What must I do to be saved?” Yet such questions would do more good than anything else you could have. They would awake a spirit of inquiry. Some of Christ’s sweetest teachings were called forth by questions.

THREE KINDS OF CHURCH SERVICES.

There ought to be three kinds of services in all churches: one for worship—to offer praise, and to wait on the Lord in prayer; another for teaching; and at these services there needn’t be a word to the unconverted, (although some men never close any meeting without presenting the Gospel), but let them be for the church people; and a third for preaching the Gospel. Sunday morning is the best time for teaching, but Sunday night is the best night in the whole week, of the regular church services, to preach the simple Gospel of the Son of God. When you have preached that, and have felt the power of the unseen world, and there are souls trembling in the balance, don’t say, as I have heard good ministers say: “If there are any in this, place concerned—at all concerned—about their souls, I will be in the pastor’s study on Friday night, and will be glad to see them.” By that time the chances are the impression will be all wiped out. Deal with them that night before the devil snatches away the good seed. Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, there should be an expectation of immediate results, and if this were the case the Church of Christ would be in a constant state of grace.

“Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” How much would Paul and Barnabas have accomplished if they had pronounced the benediction and sent these people home? It is a thing to weep over that we have got thousands and thousands of church members who are good for nothing towards extending the Kingdom of God. They understand bazaars, and fairs, and sewing-circles; but when you ask them to sit down and show a man or woman the way into God’s kingdom, they say: “Oh, I am not able to do that. Let the deacons do it, or some one else.” It is all wrong. The Church ought to be educated on this very point. There are a great many church-members who are just hobbling about on crutches. They can just make out that they are saved, and imagine that is all that constitutes a Christian in this nineteenth century. As far as helping others is concerned, that never enters their heads. They think if they can get along themselves, they are doing amazingly well. They have no idea what the Holy Ghost wants to do through them.

No matter how weak you are, God can use you; and you cannot say what a stream of salvation you may set in motion. John the Baptist was a young man when he died; but he led Andrew to Christ, and Andrew led Peter, and so the river flowed on.

In the closing pages of this book I want to give some hints in regard to passing on the good to others, and thus profiting them by your knowledge of the Bible. Every believer, whether minister or layman, is in duty bound to spread the gospel. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” was the wide command of our parting Savior to His disciples.

There are many Bible students, however, who utterly neglect the command. They are like sponges, always sucking in the Water of Life, but never imparting it to thirsty souls around.

A clergyman used to go hunting, and when his bishop reproved him, he said he never went hunting when he was on duty.

“When is a clergyman off duty?” asked the bishop.

And so with every Christian: when is he off duty?

To be ready with a promise for the dying, a word of hope for the bereaved and afflicted, of encouragement for the downhearted, of advice for the anxious, is a great accomplishment. The opportunities to be useful in these ways are numerous. Not only in inquiry-meetings and church work, but in our everyday contact with others the opening constantly occurs. A word, a look, a hand-clasp, a prayer, may have an unending influence for good.

“Is your father at home?” asked a gentleman of a doctor’s child.

“No,” he said, “he’s away.”

“Where can I find him?”

“Well,” he said, “you’ve got to look for him in some place where people are sick or hurt, or something like that. I don’t know where he is, but he’s helping somewhere.”

That ought to be the spirit animating every follower of Him who went about doing good.

LAYING DOWN RULES.

I admit one can’t lay down positive rules in dealing with individuals about their religious condition. Tin soldiers are exactly alike, but not so men. Matthew and Paul were a good way apart. The people we deal with may be widely different. What would be medicine for one might be rank poison for another. In the 15th of Luke, the elder son and the younger son were exactly opposite. What would have been good counsel for one might have been ruin to the other. God never made two persons to look alike. If we had made men, probably we would have made them all alike, even if we had to crush some bones to get them into the mould. But that is not God’s way. In the universe there is infinite variety. The Philippian jailer required peculiar treatment. Christ dealt with Nicodemus one way, and the woman at the well another way.

YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE.

It is a great mistake, in dealing with inquirers, to tell your conversion experience. Experience may have its place, but I don’t think it has its place when we are dealing with inquirers; for the first thing the man you are talking to will do will be to look for your experience. He doesn’t want your experience. He wants one of his own.

Suppose Bartimeus had gone to Jerusalem to the man that was born blind, and said:

“Now, just tell us how the Lord cured you.”

The Jerusalem man might have said: “He just spat on the ground, and anointed my eyes with the clay.”

“Ho!” says Bartimeus, “I don’t believe you ever got your sight at all. Who ever heard of such a way as that? Why, to fill a man’s eyes with clay is enough to put them out!”

Both men were blind, but they were not cured alike. A great many men are kept out of the kingdom of God because they are looking for somebody else’s experience—the experience their grandmother had, their aunt, or some one in the family.

ONE INQUIRER AT A TIME.

Then it is very important to deal with one at a time. A doctor doesn't give cod-liver oil for all complaints. "No," he says, "I must seek what each one wants." He looks at the tongue, and inquires into the symptoms. One may have ague, another typhoid fever, and another may have consumption. What a man wants is to be able to read his Bible, and to read human nature, too.

Those do best who do not run from one person in an inquiry-meeting to another, offering words of encouragement everywhere. They would do better by going to but one or two of an afternoon or evening. We are building for eternity, and can take time. The work will not then be superficial.

Try first to win the person's confidence, and then your words will have more weight. Use great tact in approaching the subject.

It will be a great help to divide persons into classes as much as possible, and bring certain passages of Scripture to bear upon these classes. It is unwise, however, to use verses that you have seen in books until you are perfectly clear in your own mind of their meaning and application. Avail yourself by all means of suggestions from outside sources, but as David could not fight in Saul's armor, so you possibly may not be able to make good use of texts and passages which have proved powerful in the hands of another. The best way is to make your own classification, and select suitable texts, which experience will lead you to adopt or change, according to circumstances. Make yourself familiar with a few passages, rather than have a hazy and incomplete idea of a large number.

The following classification may be found helpful:—

1. Believers who lack assurance; who are in darkness because they have sinned; who neglect prayer, Bible study, and other means of grace; who are in darkness because of an unforgiving spirit; who are timid or ashamed to confess Christ openly; who are not engaged in active work for the Master; who lack strength to resist temptation and to stand fast in time of trial; who are not growing in grace.
2. Believers who have backslidden.
3. Those who are deeply convicted of sin, and are seeking salvation.
4. Those who have difficulties of various kinds. Many believe that they are so sinful that God will not accept them, that they have sinned away their opportunities and now it is too late, that the gospel was never intended for them. Others are kept back by honest doubts regarding the divinity of Christ, the genuineness of the Bible. Others again are troubled by the mysteries of the Bible, the doctrines of election, instant conversion, etc., or they say they have sought Christ in vain, that they have tried and failed, they are afraid they could not hold out. A large class is in great trouble about feelings.
5. Those who make excuses. There is a wide difference between a person who has a reason and one who had an excuse to offer.

The commonest excuses are that there are so many inconsistent Christians, hypocrites in the church; that it would cost too much to become Christians, that they could not continue in their present occupation, etc.; that they expect to become Christians some day; that their companions hold them back, or would cast them off if they were converted.

6. Those who are not convicted of sin. Some are deliberately sinful; they want to "see life," to "sow their wild oats;" others are thoughtless; others again are simply ignorant of Jesus Christ and His work. A large number do not feet their need of a Savior because they are self-righteous, trusting to their own morality and good works.
7. Those who hold hostile creeds, embracing sectarians, cranks, Jews, spiritualists, infidels, atheists, agnostics, etc.

Always use your Bible in personal dealing. Do not trust to memory, but make the person read the verse for himself. Do not use printed slips or books. Hence, if convenient, always carry a Bible or New Testament with you. It is a good thing to get a man on his knees (if convenient), but don't get him there before he is ready. You may have to talk with him two hours before you can get him that far along. But when you think he is about ready, say, "Shall we not ask God to give us light on this point?" Sometimes a few minutes in prayer have done more for a man than two hours in talk. When the spirit of God has led him so far that he is willing to have you pray with him, he is not very far from the kingdom. Ask him to pray for himself. If he doesn't want to pray, let him use a Bible prayer; get him to repeat it; for example: "Lord help me!" Tell the man: "If the Lord helped that poor woman, He will help you if you make the same prayer. He will give you a new heart if you pray from the heart." Don't send a man home to pray. Of course he should pray at home, but I would rather get his lips open at once. It is a good thing for a man to hear his own voice in prayer. It is a good thing for him to cry out: "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Urge an immediate decision, but never tell a man he is converted. Never tell him he is saved. Let the Holy Spirit reveal that to him. You can shoot a man and see that he is dead, but you can not see when a man receives eternal life. You can't afford to deceive one about this great question. But you can help his faith and trust, and lead him aright.

Always be prepared to do personal work. When war was declared between France and Germany, Count von Moltke, the German general, was prepared for it. Word brought to him late at night, after he had gone to bed. "Very well," he said to the messenger, "the third portfolio on the left"; and he went to sleep again.

Do the work boldly. Don't take those in a position in life above your own, but as a rule, take those on the same footing. Don't deal with a person of opposite sex, if it can be otherwise arranged. Bend all your endeavors to answer for poor, struggling souls that question of all importance to them. "What must I do to be saved?"

CHAPTER XVI.

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS.

1. Have for constant use a portable reference Bible, a Cruden's Concordance, and a Topical Text Book.
2. Always carry a Bible or Testament in your pocket and do not be ashamed of people seeing you read it on trains, etc.
3. Do not be afraid of marking it, or of making marginal notes. Mark texts that contain promises, exhortations, warnings to sinners and to Christians, gospel invitations to the unconverted, and so on.
4. Set apart at least fifteen minutes a day for study and meditation. This little will have great results and will never be regretted.
5. Prepare your heart to know the law of the Lord, and to do it. Ezra 7:10.
6. Always ask God to open the eyes of your understanding that you may see the truth; and expect that He will answer your prayer.
7. Cast every burden of doubt upon the Lord. "He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Do not be afraid to look for a reason for the hope that is in you.
8. Believe in the Bible as God's revelation to you, and act accordingly. Do not reject any portion because it contains the supernatural, or because you can not understand it. Reverence all Scripture. Remember God's own estimate of it: "Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name."
9. Learn at least one verse of Scripture each day. Verses committed to memory will be wonderfully useful in your daily life and walk. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Some Christians can quote Shakespeare and Longfellow better than the Bible.
10. If you are a preacher or a Sunday school teacher, try at any cost to master your Bible. You ought to know it better than any one in your congregation or class.
11. Strive to be exact in quoting Scripture.
12. Adopt some systematic plan of Bible study: either topical, or by subjects, like "The Blood," "Prayer," "Hope," etc.; or by books; or by some other plan outlined in the preceding pages.
13. Study to know for what and to whom each book of the Bible was written. Combine the Old Testament with the New. Study Hebrews and Leviticus together, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, the Prophets and the historical books of the old Testament.
14. Study how to use the Bible so as to "walk with God" in closer communion; also, so as to gain a working knowledge of Scripture for leading others to Christ. An old minister used to say that the cries of neglected texts were always sounding in his ears, asking why he did not show how important they were.
15. Do not be satisfied with simply reading a chapter daily. Study the meaning of at least one verse.

Footnotes

[1] The New Topical Text Book. An aid to topical study of the Bible. Cloth, 25 cents; by mail, 30 cents.

The Bible Text Cyclopedia, a complete classification of Scripture texts in the form of an alphabetical list of subjects by Rev. James Inglis. Large 8 vo. cloth, $1.75.

Both issued by the publishers of this volume.