

The Bible: The Book of Life

By A. W. Tozer

THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE AMONG BOOKS, which means simply that no book has been produced just like it.

The Bible is not a book of history, though it contains much history, and all it does contain is authentic. It is not a book of science, though all its pronouncements upon the facts usually falling into the category of science are accurate and trustworthy. It is not a book of biography, though its biographical sketches are easily the most inspiring in the world. It is not a book of philosophy, though it is the sum of all that is deep and sound philosophy. It is not a book of astronomy, though its references to the sun and the stars rate among the loftiest sayings ever recorded. It is not a book of psychology, though its knowledge of the workings of the human mind astonishes the reader and lays bare his soul. It is not strictly a book of theology, though it is the source of all the true theology this fallen world will ever know.

What, then, is the Bible? It is the Book of Life. "The words that I speak unto you", said our Lord, "they are spirit, and they are life."

The Bible is a life-bringing and a life-giving book. It is not primarily concerned with any department of human thought for its own sake. If the Bible speaks about the rainbow, it is that we may be reminded of God's covenant of mercy with mankind. If it tells the story of Abraham, it does so that we may learn to know the place of faith in our relation to God. If it points us to the moon and the stars, it is that we may know how frail we are. If it talks about the birds, it is to teach us to trust our Heavenly Father without fear or doubting. It tells us about hell not to satisfy our morbid curiosity, but that we may steer our feet far from its terrors. It tells us about heaven that we may be prepared to enter there. It writes the history of human disgrace that we may learn the value of divine grace. It warns in order that it may turn our feet away from the paths that go down to the path of destruction. It rebukes in order that we may see our own faults and be delivered from them.

Volumes could be written in praise of the Holy Bible without using one word too many. President Woodrow Wilson once said that the Bible is a book of such importance that no one unacquainted with it can be said to be an educated man, and one who is familiar with it can be said to be uneducated. Sir Walter Scott, when he was dying, called for "the book". A servant inquired which of his thousands of volumes he meant, and the great man replied, "The Bible, of course. For a dying man there can be no other book." Even the skeptic, George Bernard Shaw, during the last years of his life, kept a Bible near him and never traveled without carrying a copy along with him.

We should all have several Bibles: a well-bound reference Bible for study and a large-print, plain-text Bible for devotional reading. That many at least. And if we can afford it (and we can if we will cut down somewhere else), we should have a good modern translation or two. There are dozens of them. Their chief value is to stimulate interest by affording a change of style and to throw sidelights upon the test of the familiar King James Version.

Money invested in Bibles is money well spent. Time spent in reading the Bible is not likely to be time wasted. The Bible is the supreme gift for friends and loved ones. Words spoken in favor of the Bible are good words and, if they should fall upon the right ears, might prove to be "apples of gold in pictures of silver".