

CHAPTER 23: The Bible

My DEAR COMRADES,

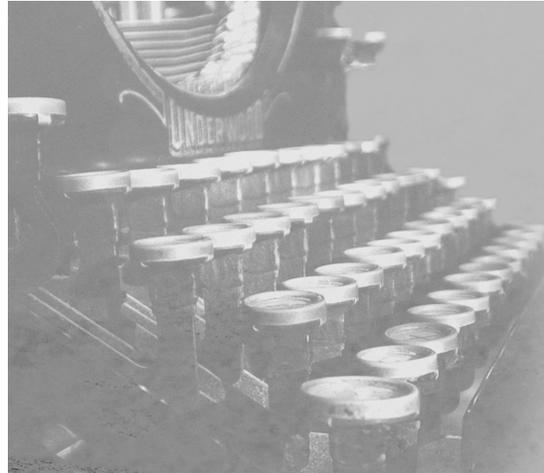
I desire to offer you some counsel about the Bible. You will all know that the Bible is a very important Book, and I have no doubt you set great store by it; indeed, I am pleased to learn that, of late, more thought is being given to its pages than ever throughout The Army. But still, I am afraid that the precious Book does not receive the attention that it demands.

Let me try to say a word or two, that will be likely to better impress upon you its great value.

The Bible is a very Wonderful Book. Its very name signifies this, for the word Bible simply means The Book, so that when we say the Bible, we mean that it is The Book, the Book which, above every other, a man should know, treasure, and obey. If, to a wise man, the choice were offered of the Bible, on the one hand, or all the books in the world, on the other, he would choose the Bible.

It is so valuable because –

1. In the first place, God is its Author. He caused it to be written under His special direction. The Holy Ghost put the thoughts which it records into the hearts of Holy men. They wrote them down; that is the reason we speak of it as the Word of God. "Holy men," etc.
2. The Bible is an important Book, because it tells us of God. We might have expected that our Heavenly Father would not leave us in ignorance about Himself. If there is a God whom we ought to serve, we might be quite sure that He would want to tell us of His Power and Love, and to declare what His feelings are towards us. And that is just what He has done in the Bible. It is a precious Book because it is a revelation of God.
3. The Bible is a valuable Book, because from it we learn all that we know about the



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Birth and Life, the Sufferings, and Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Except for one or two passing remarks in one other very ancient book, we should all be in ignorance of the career of our Lord but for the Bible. Then we have the wonderful story of His Earthly Journeyings, His Marvellous Miracles, His Wonderful Addresses; His glorious Death and Resurrection; and oh, what a fascinating story it is!

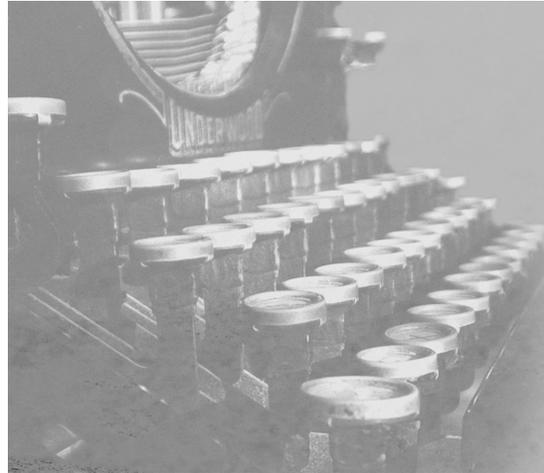
4 The Bible tells us all we know with certainty about the Future State. We should be in utter ignorance of what happens after Death if it were not for the Bible. It is the Bible that tells us of the Resurrection of the Dead, the Great White Throne, the Heaven of Delight, and the Hell of Misery. But for the Bible we should be in complete darkness concerning these important things.

5. It is the Bible that tells us of the merits of the Precious Blood of our dear Saviour, the possibilities of the Forgiveness of Sins, the Purification of our Hearts, the Protection of God, and the Triumph of a dying hour. Of these blessed possibilities mankind would know nothing without the Bible.

6. The Bible has had a mighty influence for good on the World in the years that are past. It has won the hearts and enlightened the lives of millions. It has rescued multitudes from the Horrible Pit, led their feet to the Rock of Ages, filled their mouths with singing, kept them from falling into Hell, and guided them safely to the golden streets of the Celestial City.

7. The Bible has been more bitterly attacked and more cruelly slandered than any other Book in existence. Again and again men have exerted every power to effect its destruction. But it has survived all opposition, and to-day is more widely circulated, and is probably more generally read, than ever before. Not all the powers of Earth and Hell combined have been able to destroy the blessed Bible.

8. Bad men hate the Bible, denounce it, call it hard names, call in question its truths, and wish it were out of existence. Good men love it, read it, make it the guide of their lives, spread it abroad, and thank God for its precious pages.



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9. The Truths written down and explained in the Bible have done wonders for salvationists. What would you have been without them? But for the free Salvation set forth in the Bible, many of you would have been in the grave, and your souls cast into outer darkness, while others would have been on their way there. Oh, precious Book! What a priceless blessing it has been to The Salvation Army!

Now, my Comrades, I want to ask the question, What ought you to do with the Bible? Ought you to Neglect it – pass it over for the Newspaper, the Story Book, or other rubbish? By no means. That is how the godless world around you deals with the precious treasure. What, then, ought you to do? I will tell you.

1. The very least that you can do with the Bible is to Read it. If I, your General, sent you a letter, you could not do less than read it over, try to understand it, and strive to do what I requested in it.

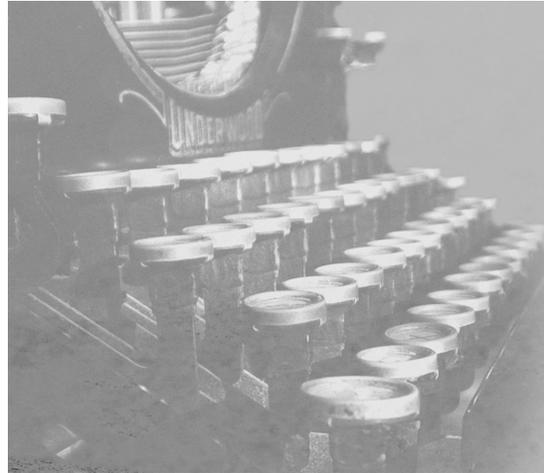
The Bible is a Letter from your Heavenly Father; you cannot do less with His Letter than you would do with one from The General.

2. Read it alone. Read a few verses at a time; read them on your knees; read them as you walk the streets; while you take your midday meal, when you rise in the morning, when you retire at night; and read the blessed Book in your spare moments.

3. Read it in your Families. Impress its precious Truths on your children, if you are Parents. Explain them to the ignorant – make them understand, Use the "Soldier's Guide." If you read a chapter of that Book every morning and one every night, you will go through the Bible in a year.

The "Soldier's Guide" is a selection of readings from the Bible for morning and evening each day in the year. It is so arranged as to include nearly the whole of the Bible in the year's readings. May be obtained from 100, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C. Price: red French morocco, gilt, 2s. 6d.; red leather, 1s. 6d.; red cloth, 1s.

4. See to it that you experience in your own hearts the blessings the Bible offers you. Remember, it will be little better than a curse to you if you only know the Word, and



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do not possess and live in the spirit of it. If you only believe it with your head, and do not enjoy the things that it describes, and accept the Mercy, wash in the Fountain, receive the Holy Ghost, and live and die in the light and joy of its good tidings, it will only add to your condemnation and guilt.

5. Fulfill the Duties it commands. It is the doers of the Word Who are blessed. Make it the guide of your life: at home, abroad, in your Corps, in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow, everywhere and all the time.

6. Publish the Salvation of the Bible wherever you go – in the Streets – in the Barracks – in your Home – at your Work – everywhere tell the Glad Tidings.

Oh, my Comrades, do not let the Bible rise up in judgment against you, as it surely will if you either neglect it, or if, reading and knowing about the Salvation and Victory of which it tells, you do not enjoy that Salvation and experience that Victory.