

THE BIBLE
II

Comrades and Friends, — Last week I sent you a Message concerning the importance of the Bible. This morning I wish to say something further about that Blessed Book.

In speaking of that Book, you will remember I told you that what our poor world in her miseries and sins needed with respect to that Book, was —

I. —That the Bible should be more widely circulated.

And I said that no one has more profound respect for it, or wishes to circulate it more widely than The Army does.

II. —That the Bible should be more carefully read and understood.

Let us never lose a chance of getting the right interpretation of its precious words.

III. —That the Bible should be more truly believed.

Holy and enthusiastic Salvationists will greatly help the attainments of that result.

IV. —That the Bible should be more fully obeyed, both in the spirit and the letter.

We had God in man two thousand years ago; now we need the Bible in man.

1. To do something towards supplying this great need, every Salvationist should be a living, walking, fighting Bible, which can be seen, and read, and felt by every soul about him. The Apostle John says that 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'

Now, as you know, words are used to express our thoughts and feelings to those about us.



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So Jesus Christ – the Divine Word – became a man in order to make us know by His speech, action, suffering, and death what the thoughts and feelings of God really are towards us.

2. So we want the words of the Holy Book to be made flesh in our day. That is, we want the truths and doctrines of the Bible to so take possession of the souls of men that they shall live and act them out before the people around them, and show them by living pictures what the Bible teaching.

The men and the women that are moved and actuated by the Bible, will explain the goodness and love of God by being good and loving themselves.

They will teach the evil of sin by trampling it under foot themselves.

They will teach the beauty of holiness by living true, honest, industrious, kindly, pure lives themselves.

They will teach the sacrificing compassion of Jesus Christ by themselves pitying the lost, and seeking to save the souls of men.

They will reveal in themselves the joy of a real conquering religion by a glad and victorious warfare.

3. But does some one ask for a further reason for the necessity of living Bibles?

I reply:

a. Notwithstanding all that has been said and done, men everywhere are woefully ignorant of the all-important things revealed in the Bible.

b. They are ignorant of God; they have the most mistaken views about Him; they think Him a hard Master, or a Being with whom they can trifle as they choose.

c. Many are ignorant of His purposes and desires respecting them. They do not see that His aim is to make them good on earth, and happy in Heaven.

d. They are ignorant of what He wants them to do and to be, and of their ability to comply with His wishes. They count religion to be impossible to them in their helplessness and sin.



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e. They are ignorant about religion altogether; they think it a melancholy affair at the best, or that compliance with its demands is altogether beyond their ability.

4. Now, the Bible would explain all these perplexities if men would but read it. Some cannot read it. The more is the pity!

Many will not read it. The more their shame. They despise it; they think it beneath their notice, and unworthy of their study; they do not like the subject of which it treats.

They will spend years of hard searching thought and exhaust fortunes of money on questions that have not the most distant connexion with their usefulness, their happiness, or their hereafter. They will not go to Meeting where it is read or talked about even by men who have had half a century's acquaintance with its truths; in fact, they take every opportunity of pouring polite and respectable contempt upon the Word of God. They have a Bible, but they never open its covers – they won't read it.

5. But they will read men and women who are living Bibles. They will read you. They cannot help doing so. Therefore, live the Bible right out before their eyes. Remember:

V. –You will be read in your family.

1. The wife reads the husband; she knows him off by heart; and she is likely to copy him also. I venture to say that very few wives, with truly Salvation husbands, go far astray from the belief and practice of sound religion.

2. The husband reads the wife, with a similar result, or nearly so.

3. The children read father and mother and one another.

VI. – You will be read in your workshops.

Your mates may not always tell you what they think, but they have a pretty correct idea of you in their secret souls all the same.



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VII. – You will be read in your Corps.

You can make your Comrades understand what the true Salvation Soldier ought to be, better and more quickly, by living the Bible out before their eyes, than by any amount of testimony and profession without doing so.

VIII. – You will be read as you walk about the streets and roads of the town in which you live, especially if you walk about in uniform.

If your soul is right with God, your character and conduct will portray the life Christ wants men and women to live more effectively than hundreds of Testaments, which many think it the work of Christ to distribute without living the Christ life. Those who will see you will understand what your life says; they cannot help doing so.

IX. – So come along, my Comrades, and be living pictures of the principles and practices of that Divine religion which God wants to spread over the earth.

1. Be living pictures of practical godliness; that is, exhibit the principles of the Bible in your everyday life and practice.
2. Be living pictures of experimental religion; that is, be examples of the personal realization and blessings of pardon, purity, power, and peace, set forth and promised in the Bible.
3. Be living pictures of that love for souls for which the Bible calls, and without which I cannot see how any man or any woman can remain a follower of Jesus Christ.
4. In short, and as a summing up of the whole matter, be living examples not only of the letter of the Bible – that is important – but what is of far more importance still, be living examples of its spirit and its power; so that out of you there may flow liberty, light, and love, to all men.

Your affectionate General,

William Booth.