

Take a particular book—one of the prophets, a gospel or an epistle—and try and find out its main purpose, its central meaning, for not till we know its scope and design shall we know the vital message with which it is charged. To pick and nibble at choice portions may be well enough for certain occasions and all that is necessary for certain purposes; but this is not to be compared, nor must it displace, that profound and comprehensive knowledge of its full message of revelation, and of the bible as a whole, nor must it conflict with that proper aim to grasp its grand deliverances that come out clearer and richer as we advance from the earlier to the later portions, and in this way to be elevated and sustained by the whole scope and fulness of its grand disclosures.

Let the intelligent reader trace in this way the gradual development of such central themes as the promises of the Messiah, the kingdom of God on earth, the person of Christ, His atonement for sin, the disclosures given of the Triune God, the great truths of a resurrection and a future life, and how gradually and wonderfully all these are unfolded and come out clearer and fuller as the course of revelation runs on, even as the morning broadens and deepens into the noonday. Our belief in Christ's divinity, His atonement for sin, etc., does not rest so much on any favorite proof texts, as on the whole testimony and teaching of the Word of God. It is the conviction begotten in us of a wide, wise reading of our bibles. We feel borne on by its broad, strong currents into those grand conclusions which compel belief and sway our judgment. It is not so much what this verse or the other says as the joint effect of its combined teaching.

Instead, therefore, of always quoting isolated texts in proof we must learn to *study our bibles as a whole*, and look at its magnificent landscapes as well as pick up its pearls and gems. Instead of teaching truth away from its natural connection we must study the scope of each paragraph, chapter and book, and determine its place and compass. It is very seldom that one text represents the full teaching of Christ on any subject.

The value of this consecutive study of the scriptures is not sufficiently insisted on, and is in consequence fast becoming a lost art. We turn up to our favorite proof texts,