

WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE

Editor "Hope's Quiet Hour."

I see so many inspiring thoughts in your columns on different subjects, I thought I would like to hear an essay on "Why I Believe the Bible."—John 2: 23; 5: 36-47. A SUBSCRIBER.

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?—S. John v.: 39, 46, 47.

My only excuse for my long delay in adopting Subscriber's suggestion is that the subject was too big for me. To crowd into two columns of space enough materials to fill a thousand volumes, is beyond my power, and to explain satisfactorily all the innumerable reasons "why I believe the Bible," is as impossible as it would be to pack the accumulations of a lifetime in one small trunk.

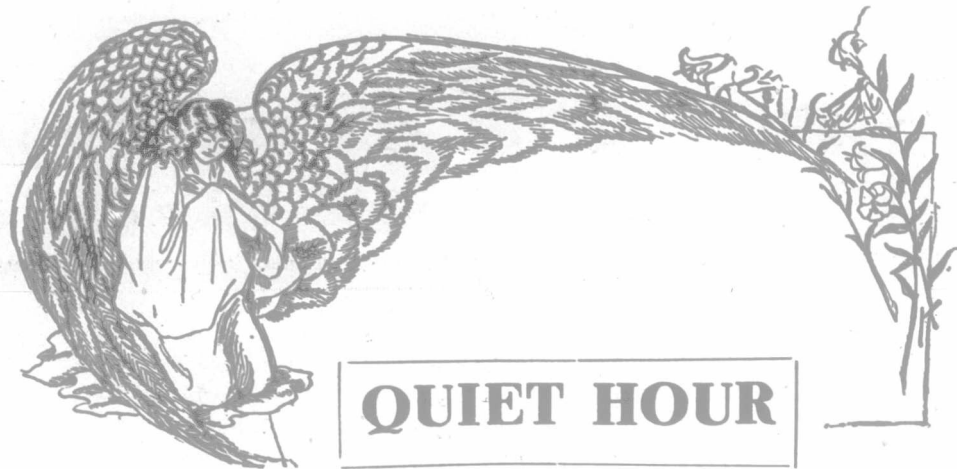
But I feel the importance of expressing some of my views on this subject, even though I can only touch the fringe of it. So, if I get lost in a multitude of reasons, you will know there are thousands more which might be laid before you.

This is an age of criticism, and everything that cannot prove its value is likely to be crowded out. Let us begin by the question: "Is the Bible valuable?"

To that question, the answer must be "YES." Man does not live by bread alone, he is hungry for spiritual truth. The Bible is a treasury of inspiring, cheering, strengthening utterances. It has provided an inexhaustible supply for millions of preachers, and its stores are as rich as ever. Philip the Evangelist, once found another man reading Isaiah 53, so he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Christ Himself, after His Resurrection, began at Moses and all the prophets, expounding to two disciples as they walked along the road "in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." St. Paul took the Old Testament writings as his text when he preached to the Jews, and it mattered little where he began, he could find Christ anywhere. In one of his letters—Epistle to Romans—he alluded to passages in the Psalms, Deut., Gen., Hab., Isa., Ezek., Mal., Exod., Jer., Hos., Lev., Joel, Kings, and Prov.; referring to many of these Books many times. There are more than fifty references to the Old Testament in that one letter. Our Lord was constantly referring to the writings of Moses and the prophets, and He says in our text that they wrote about Him and testified of Him, though they had not seen Him.

What would the world be like if there had been no Bible in it? I once read a little story called "The Blank Bible." It was a dream of a world in which all the Bible words had been magically obliterated. Every Bible was a blank book, every sentence quoted from it in other books was wiped out. People were filled with consternation, until one after another wrote down sentences which were familiar, and in time nearly all the most priceless passages were restored. But that was only a dream of a world which had lost the written Word. What would be our terrible loss if we had never known the glorious truths of Revelation?

The Bible is the Word of God, spoken through human instruments. Many are trembling, in these days of criticism, because they are afraid they can no longer trust their Bible as an infallible authority. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," says S. Paul. Can anyone define exactly what that word "inspiration" really means? It meant, in the case of Jonah, that he was sent with a message from God to Nineveh. He was inspired to warn the people, and was given such power that they "believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." And yet this inspired prophet was very far from entering into the true spirit of the God of Lev.: When "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not," Jonah was exceedingly displeased and very angry. His dignity as a prophet meant more to him than the destruction of a great city in which were more than 120,000 little



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children. The Bible itself tells us that, and need we be surprised if other men who were inspired by God to carry His messages, sometimes failed to understand the Love which sent them?

S. Paul, in 2 Tim., iii.: 15-17, says that the holy scriptures "are able to make thee wise unto salvation," and are profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Any honest person, reading the Bible in a teachable spirit, must own that it is profitable for these things. In the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read that God in past times spake unto the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son. If the Bible is the Word spoken by God through human lips, much more is Christ the Word of God in human form. The Bible's greatest value is that it testifies of Christ, from Genesis to Revelation. If we want to hear what Christ, the Word of God, is saying to us to-day, we must read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the words He uttered when He walked visibly among men, and must also find out what God wishes to teach us about Christ, through the words of prophets and apostles.

When a missionary goes out to savages, he does not usually—I should

the Bible searching for flaws, you need not be surprised if you don't find its pages profitable for instruction. In fact, you may be harmed by using strong medicine foolishly. St. Peter says that in his beloved brother Paul's epistles "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." It is not safe to treat lightly and recklessly sharp-edged tools, and the Bible itself warns us that "the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Our Lord said to the Sadducees: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scripture," because they denied the reality of a resurrection, not understanding that the familiar words: "I AM the God of Abraham," proved that Abraham still lived. God is the God of the living. It is possible to be very familiar with the words of the Bible and yet fail utterly to hear God speaking in it. It is possible to argue very hotly over the question of the authorship of the first five books, or be very indignant with those scholars who consider that the story of Adam and Eve talking to the serpent is intended to be an allegory, and yet fail in brotherly love most terribly. Love is the keynote of the Bible. It reveals the love of God to His



AN ALLURING SCENE IN DOG DAYS

think—begin with such searching, spiritual truths as are set before Christians in the Sermon on the Mount. They have to be taught first that it is wrong to kill and eat people, and such elementary truths, which we hardly expect to hear impressed on ordinary congregations in this country. The missionary does not at once insist that polygamy and slavery shall be instantly stopped. He instils principles of higher living, which grow, and in time kill out the evil. So we find that polygamy is not so sternly forbidden in the Old Testament as in the New. People had to be educated slowly. And as for slavery, it is not actually forbidden in words, even by Christ; and yet His teaching has slowly, but surely, crowded it out of Christian countries.

The Bible is a revelation of God, growing more and more clear through the ages, until it shines out in perfect beauty in the Face of Christ.

Our best answer to those who doubt its value is "Read it, and see." But it must be read with an earnest desire to find truth, and with the spiritual eyes open. Go through a beautiful garden, looking for withered leaves and thorns, and you will probably find what you look for, and entirely miss the beauty of flowers and fruit. So, if you go through

children—a love that is tender and forgiving, yet stern in condemning evil. And it calls the world to catch the inspiration of the infinite love of God and reflect the light.

Let us have faith in our Bible. Why should we be afraid to let the critics examine it? We may have to change some of our mistaken notions about it, but the more we can learn about it the better. God's word need not shrink from the light. If you ever get nervous and imagine that the Bible is not inspired by God, don't sit down and fret. Open the Bible and read it, with prayer for the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. If you pray earnestly and read thoroughly you will certainly find that it is God's word to you. If you doubt the value of the medicine, take it. Really speak to God, and listen for His answer, or you may miss the "still small voice."

This is a very imperfect answer to an important question, but the truth is that everyone must dig for treasure himself, if he wants to find it. I can't tell out to you the glory of the Bible, any more than I could tell a blind man about the glory of the sun. Seeing is believing. Browning says: "The more of doubt, the stronger faith"—but it is only when faith has proved its strength

by victory—"If faith o'ercomes doubt." DORA FARNCOMB.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

We have sipped the cup of sorrow,
Thou and I;
We have waited a to-morrow,
Thou and I;
We have watched beside a bed,
Bending o'er a little head,
Crushed beneath the weight of dread,
Thou and I.

We have owned our helplessness
Thou and I;
We have sought God in distress,
Thou and I;

We have shed a common tear
When no other help was near,
Prayed together in our fear,
Thou and I.

Shall we break the ties that bind us,
Thou and I?

Shall we put those days behind us,
Thou and I?

God has wed with grief and pain,
Shall we prove that union vain,
Shall we go our ways again,
Thou and I?

J. C. McCLAGHRY, in *The Circle*.

Accept God's will entirely and never suppose that you could serve Him better in any other way. You can never serve Him well, save in the way He chooses. Supposing that you were never to be set free from trial, what would you do? You would say to God, "I am Thine—if my trials are acceptable to Thee, give me more and more." I have full confidence that this is what you would say, and then you would not think more of it—at any rate, you would not be anxious. Well, do the same now. Make friends with your trials, as though you were always to live together; and you will see that when you cease to take thought for your own deliverance, God will take thought for you; and when you cease to help yourself eagerly, He will help you.—Francis de Sales.



SHINTO PRIEST IN JAPAN