

about, and say, 'This is Abraham, or Paul, or John.' My thoughts have been so much with them and about them, and my Bible tells me so many things of them, I believe I should know them at sight."

Something in that Bible biography is various in incident and rich in lesson. It is a gallery for devout study. Beyond mere interest, it has use; hence so much of the Bible is made up of living as well as teaching. Conceptions of abstract doctrines are thereby corrected. Imagination is restrained by facts. That Christian is not "thoroughly furnished" who has not studied the characters of men and women, as portrayed in his Bible. His theology may be systematic, but it lacks the practical touch.

Then how desire after the heavenly state is strengthened by forming acquaintance here with whom the world was not worthy; patriarchs and prophets, saints and martyrs. Even a heathen, Socrates, when dying, solaced himself by calling to mind the noble companions death would join him to.

A Bible Christian goes no stranger to heaven. Besides that central and glorious One, whom having not seen yet he has loved, there are spirits of just men made perfect he has long been in sympathy with; companions ready for him. Their example has stimulated him, and by considering their trials he has better endured his own.

How with him who has neglected the Bible? There are glorious careers and characters in it he is a stranger to. Are there not Christians, old and respectable, who have never read their Bibles through? Plenty of them! Much need they will have of introductions. They will be slow at entering into the joys of their fellows.—There are truths and revelations in their books—great, precious, wonderful things, that would be news to them in heaven! For the first time they will hear of them, and have shameful need to be taught, when now they ought to be teachers, as well as judges of angels. Neglecters, despisers of the word! But let the preacher tell it:—

"Now just suppose one of this sort, as by fire or the skin of his teeth, gets into heaven. He has smattering of scripture, just enough to blunder on; goes up to a

'shining one,' Elisha, and essays to commune with him:—

"You are the brother that went up in a chariot and horses of fire?"

"No; that was Elijah."

"Oh, ah; I didn't know there was but one of you—names very much alike."

"Had you not a Bible to read?"

"Yes, one of the best morocco bound, with gilt clasps."

"I dare say, brethren," continued the preacher, "he would then see a difference between having it and reading it. A plain one would have better fitted him for heaven."

"But he goes blundering on; and comes up with one called Judas, and is sure he can't be mistaken this time:—

"Ah, can you be here? You that betrayed your Master and committed suicide? Can this be heaven, where such as you are? Avaunt!"

"Not so fast, friend. There was a 'Judas, not Iscariot;' hast not heard of him? One of the twelve—brother of James and our Lord. Had you no Bible? Perhaps you could not read, or lived before printing was invented, when it took the wages of a labouring man thirteen years to get a copy of the Holy Scriptures. Friend, of what century?"

"Of the nineteenth century on the earth, in the time of the Bible Society. I often gave liberally to send the Bible to the heathen, for Bibles were cheap, and the heathens were said to need them."

"What, friend!—sent all your Bibles to the heathen, and kept none for yourself and family? That was doubtful charity."

"O yes—had a splendid one at home; the old family Bible that lay on the stand."

"Yes," said the preacher, "it did lay on the stand, that was the misery of it.—Just think of a Christian going from this land and age so ignorant that he shies one of the apostles! Better quit, O Christian of the nineteenth century. You are out of place, and ought to be ashamed. You that sent the Bible to others, and had half a dozen in one shape or other about your house, and yet find yourself cut off, as by a gulf of ignorance, from communion with choicest spirits. As very a stranger as though you had come up from Central Africa!"

"But he stumbles on. Encounters on