

I read it *through*, and I feel as if I had never seen the Book before. I have spent most of my life in reading and expounding it, yet it seems as if I had never seen it. It is so new, so rich, so varied, the truth flashing from a thousand unexpected and undiscovered points, with a light above the brightness of the sun. And that summer-reading of the Bible is what I call tuning the instrument.

If anybody does not believe the Bible, he has never read it through; he may have read a little here and there, with general commentaries and criticisms between, but he has not read the whole. Once, two men said, "We will disprove the conversion of Paul." They read it through—and wrote a book in proof of it. So will God deal with all destructive critics who really make themselves masters of the situation they intended to overthrow.

It is wonderful, if you read the whole, how it gets hold of you somewhere. I have tried it; and I appeal to you who know it best, whether you will willingly let it drop out of your fingers, when it has once got into the movement and necessity of your being.

Suppose you should ask a man to read this book clean through at one sitting. What would his notions be? I do not ask him the memory of particular texts, but I would say, "What are your general notions?" I should not be surprised to hear him say: "It is a *very solemn* book. There were deep soundings in it that made me shudder with a chill the like of which I never felt before."

What more? "The infinite reluctance with which God gives up man; that struck me in reading the Book from end to end. The pain, the yearning of God, the moan of a mother, the cry of a broken heart—it was very wonderful. I felt in reading it as if God were putting out both his arms, straining his eyes after me, and crying out to me, 'Come back!' I cried at some parts of it myself; I forget just now where they were, but I think you will find the tears on the pages here and there even yet. It seemed as if God was saying, 'Image of my countenance, upright like myself, susceptible of immortality, companion of my life, wrecked and shattered, wounded and dying, yet how can I give thee up? Ye were not made for death; why will ye die?'"

What more? "I remember it was a *righteous Book*. There were pages in it when the wicked man had his own way; but presently God searched him out and brought him to judgment. It made me glad, and in the middle of my reading I thought—would that the Book were at the basis of all political legislation, at the heart of all commercial enterprise; would that it were the secret of all civilisation, and the inspiration of all domestic and national life.

"And I remember this about it, that *it seems to be all other books*. I have read a great many books, and I feel now that I need not have read them; they are all here. Novels—it is all there in the prodigal son. Two men, the runaway son, the scape-