

# “AS THE SMALL RAIN”

by

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## CHAPTER ONE

### “THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT (Psalm 119:130)

#### NO OTHER NAME

“THE devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.” Shakespeare puts these words into the mouth of one of his characters in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the Scriptures themselves bear evidence of the accuracy of Shakespeare’s observation, for the devil in tempting Christ quoted the Word of God. Evil and dishonest men have never hesitated to use a passage of Scripture in an attempt to justify their wrong course of action or to excuse their evildoing. Of course, such a procedure is in itself evil and dishonest since the Scripture is by them misquoted or misused or misapplied. The Word of God nowhere admonishes men to a course of action which violates the law of God.

Whatever else the Scriptures may or may not prove, they do testify that the Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. It is a sad fact that by many people today this great and primary truth of the Book is overlooked or forgotten.

Apollos preaching at Ephesus convinced his hearers, “**showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ**” (Acts 18:28). Christ Himself admonished His hearers to “**search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me**” (John 5:39). Christ is the center of the Book, the burden of the prophet’s message, the theme of the psalmist’s lay, the chief character of the Gospels, the fountainhead and inspiration of the Epistles, the sublime and majestic central figure of Revelation.

The Bible discloses God’s purpose and love for man. It is God’s Written Word. Christ is the Incarnate Word—the Word of God come in the flesh. The Bible speaks of Christ. Christ manifests in His own wonderful Person the truth of the Bible.

Men today wrest the Scriptures to prove their own pet theories and opinions. They are glibly quoting Scripture without regard for its purpose or true teaching. But the man who searches the Word diligently with an open mind cannot fail to be convinced of the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the One come in the flesh to redeem men from sin by the blood which He shed upon Calvary’s cross. He must admit the truth of the Bible’s teaching that “**there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**”

In the sacred pages of Holy Writ, God the Father claims Christ as His Son, proclaims His deity, acclaims His perfections. Through the Word the Father speaks to us of the Christ, “**This is my beloved Son: hear him.**”

O Word of God Incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O Light of our dark sky;  
We praise Thee for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps,  
Shines on from age to age.

The Church from her dear Master  
Received the gift divine,  
And still that light she lifteth  
O'er all the earth to shine.  
It is the golden casket  
Where gems of truth are stored;  
It is the heav'n-drawn picture  
Of Christ the living Word.

It floateth like a banner  
Before God's host unfurled;  
It shineth like a beacon  
Above the darkling world;  
It is the chart and compass  
That o'er life's surging sea,  
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands  
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.

—William W. How

## **THE CRITICS FAIL**

I HAVE watched a scientist, as he lectured on the wonders of botany, tear a flower petal from petal and part from part until there was no flower left. That which had been beautiful was destroyed. Instead of the perfect loveliness of the blossom there were scattered petals and yellow pollen. In his efforts to discover for himself or point out to others the intricate structure of the flower, he destroyed it. Vivisectionists have cut up living bodies trying to discover the secret of life and in the process they have destroyed life.

The so-called “higher critics” remind one of the botanist and the vivisectionist. They seek to tear apart the Word of God. Verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book, author by author, they untwist and unwind and pry apart. They dissect that which is a living whole.

Of course, man cannot destroy the Bible. God's Word is forever fixed in heaven. Higher criticism, which never takes into account the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural character of the Scripture, can never destroy the Word which is as eternal as the God who gave it. In their effort to prove their own theories as to authorship and to discover contradictions in the Word where no contradictions exist, they only dull further the blunt blades of their own intellectual instruments.

The sad part about the whole process, however, is this. As far as their own perception is concerned they miss the beauty of the flower which they seek to analyze and divide part from part. Though they can never destroy the living word, they are unconscious that it is living and vital and as they cut out a fragment here and a fragment there, they fail to find the eternal life which God's Word offers to them, for this book from Genesis to Revelation speaks of Him who is the Life of God, the One who is the Author of eternal life, the One who came that man might have life. The Word of God is a whole.

To the believer each portion is precious and each promise is sweet. The analysis of all the higher critics in the world cannot explain it. The wisdom of man cannot reproduce it any more than the botanist can make a flower or the scientist give life.

Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,  
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,  
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "The Anvil of God's Word  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,  
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

— John Clifford

## **FOOLISH PREACHING**

PEOPLE have a way of saying, "I would read the Bible more except that I cannot understand it." Many Bible scholars will agree that there are certain parts in the Book whose meaning they cannot understand. This is no reflection on the Bible, however, but rather upon the low spiritual understanding of man. I doubt if there are any two students of the Bible who will agree completely on the interpretation of every part of the Word, but the Bible is always clear and explicit and easily understood when it tells a man what he needs to know in order to be saved. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."**

**“There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”** says Peter speaking of Christ. The Son of God Himself made the way of salvation perfectly plain when He said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”** In those words, called the heart of the Gospel (John 3:16), the way of salvation is again plainly stated: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** It is not understanding the Bible that saves man. It is trusting Christ.

Some men have not read enough of the Bible to know whether they understand it or not, but this much is certain: when you have trusted Christ as your Saviour, and love Him, you will find a love for the Bible and a desire to read it. The one who reads the Bible with faith in the Christ whom the Book reveals, finds that much which was, before his conversion, beyond his comprehension, now has become clear and plain.

In his first letter to the Corinthian Church, Paul says, **“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.”** That is, the Gospel of the grace of God seems a foolish thing to those who have not experienced it. He continues, **“But unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”**

As a child of God, having experienced His grace, one understands the Word of God in a way in which the unsaved never can. The Book itself is explicit on this point: **“But the natural man received, not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”** The man who is born of the Spirit, who has had a personal experience with God, will understand many things in the Word of God which were beyond his comprehension before he was saved. But anyone can interpret the plain meaning of Scripture where the Book points the way of salvation.

The Spirit breathes upon the Word,  
And brings the truth to sight;  
Precepts and promises afford  
A sanctifying light.

A glory gilds the sacred page  
Majestic like the sun;  
It gives a light to every age—  
It gives, but borrows none.

—William Cowper

## **FOR ALL MEN**

A MISSIONARY traveling in the Near East stopped for the night in the tent of a shepherd whom he had visited several years before. The old nomad greeted him with the question, “Did you bring back the sheep book?”

For a moment the missionary was at a loss to understand the meaning of the question. Then it occurred to him that when he had last seen the old shepherd he had read to him in his own language the Twenty-third Psalm, and to this ignorant keeper of flocks the Bible was the “sheep book.” He understood its language as it spoke about the Shepherd and the sheep. They were things with which he was familiar.

Wonderful Book! Each man finds in its pages something which seems addressed especially to him. The sinner sees his picture, painted by the hand of God in the words of the holy men of old, who “**spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost**” (II Peter 1:21). He sees his sin set forth; in all its blackness. Beholding himself pictured as God sees him, he becomes conscious of his need for a Saviour, and in the pages of the Bible the Saviour is presented, Jesus Christ who bore the guilt of the sinner on the cross and became the propitiation for his sin.

Lonely hearts find comfort as they turn its pages. The seekers after knowledge find divine truth. The Bible must be God’s Book, for its appeal is broader than any nation or century or language or class of men. It sounds the depths of the human soul. It probes into the thoughts of the mind and the impulses instinctive in the human heart. Chinese hearing God’s Word for the first time cry, “This Book was written for the Chinese.” The women of India say it was written for them. Both are right. To them and to all men everywhere God speaks through the Bible, His own infallible Word.

God, in the Gospel of His Son,  
Makes His eternal counsels known;  
Where love in all its glory shines,  
And truth is drawn in fairest lines.

Here sinners of a humble frame  
May taste His grace, and learn His Name;  
May read, in characters of blood,  
The wisdom, pow’r and grace of God.

The pris’ner here may break his chains;  
The weary rest from all his pains;  
The captive feel his bondage cease;  
The mourner find the way of peace.

Here faith reveals to mortal eyes  
A brighter world beyond the skies;  
Here shines the light which guides our way  
From earth to realms of endless day.

O grant us grace, Almighty Lord,  
To read and mark Thy holy Word;  
Its truths with meekness to receive,  
And by its holy precepts live.

—Thomas Cotterill

## THE DIVINE AUTHOR

THE proof of the inspiration of Scripture may be found not only in that which the Bible contains, but also in that which is omitted from the Book. Were the Bible, like other books, only the product of the minds and hearts and experiences of human writers, there would have been many more details set down. The human instinct of curiosity about people and places and events would have been by human authors more fully satisfied. The record would have been embellished and colored and dramatized.

Take, for example, the Gospels. They contain the account of the life of our Lord upon earth. The four books together would make a very small volume, not more than can be read quite easily in a few hours' time. They deal with the greatest personality ever to appear on the stage of history. They are the record of His life, His ministry, His dramatic and tragic death, the stupendous miracle of His resurrection. Modern biographers write hundreds of pages about relatively unimportant men and women, but God, the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, gives us this short account of the life among men of the Saviour of the world. Many of His deeds, much that He said, is left unrecorded. John himself toward the close of His book notes this, "**And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book**" (John 20:30). And, in the last verse, he gives us the reason for the things which the record does contain. "**But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**"

All that men need to know in order to be saved is found in the Word of God. God's dealings with men are there set forth. The Book records His law and declares His will. In reading it the sinner is convicted, the backslider admonished, the saint comforted. It not only points the way to heaven. It affords light and strength and joy to those who walk that Way.

The heav'ns declare Thy glory,  
Lord, In ev'ry star Thy wisdom shines;  
But when our eyes behold Thy Word,  
We read Thy Name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,  
And nights and days, Thy pow'r confess;  
But the blest volume Thou didst write,  
Reveals Thy justice and Thy grace.

Sun, moon, and stars convey Thy praise  
Round the whole earth, and never stand;  
So, when Thy truth began its race,  
It touch'd and glanc'd on ev'ry land.

Nor shall Thy spreading Gospel rest,  
Till thro' the world Thy truth has run;  
Till Christ has all the nations blest  
That see the light or feel the sun.

Great Sun of Righteousness, arise;  
Bless the dark world with heavenly light;  
The Gospel makes the simple wise;  
Thy laws are pure, Thy judgments right.

Thy noblest wonders here we view,  
In souls renewed, and sins forgiven;  
Lord, cleanse our sins, our souls renew,  
And make Thy Word our guide to heaven.

—Isaac Watts

## **BEST SELLER**

THE Bible judged from any standpoint is an unusual and remarkable Book. The book of Job, the oldest portion according to the opinion of sound scholarship, is more than three thousand years old. The newest portion, the book of Revelation, was written about 96 A.D. Between these two books, through the intervening centuries, the others were written by approximately forty men. Yet there is not a single contradiction or discrepancy in the whole book.

The Bible is not a treatise on science, but when it deals with science it is scientifically accurate. It is not primarily a book of history, yet the archaeologist digging up the records of ancient civilization has proved over and over again its historical inerrancy. From every viewpoint it is the world's most valuable volume. Someone has said that wicked men would not have written the Bible because it reproves human wickedness. Good men would not have written it because it claims divine authorship.

The only explanation of the Book is found in the fact that the Bible "came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). God Himself, through the instrumentality of His servants, who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is the Author of the Book.

The Word has a radiant and transforming power over mind and heart and life. "**The entrance of thy words giveth light**" (Psalm 119:130). The Word of God throws light upon the relationship of man with man, nation with nation, and upon the relationship of men and nations with God. There is no other volume which so stimulates the mind and enlightens the intellect.

But the Bible does more than bring intellectual enlightenment. It expels spiritual darkness in the human heart and brings the light of the very presence of God Himself into the souls of those who accept its promises and trust the Redeemer whom it reveals.

The man who believes and loves the Book finds it a lamp to his feet in the darkness of this world and a light on the path which he walks (Psalm 119: 105). The Book gives light. The Book is light. The Word of God treasured in the human heart dispels the darkness of sin.

The psalmist has written, “**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee**” (Psalm 119: 11). The Word inwardly pondered affects outward action. The Word of God hidden in the human heart does not stay hidden. Like a bright flame in a lamp, its light shines out through the life.

Though the cover is worn  
And the pages are torn,  
And though places bear traces of tears,  
Yet more precious than gold  
Is the Book, worn and old,  
That can shatter and scatter my fears.

When I prayerfully look  
In the precious old Book,  
Many pleasures and treasures I see;  
Many tokens of love  
From the Father above,  
Who is nearest and dearest to me.

This old Book is my guide,  
‘Tis a friend by my side,  
It will lighten and brighten my way;  
And each promise I find  
Soothes and gladdens my mind  
As I read it and heed it today.

— Anonymous

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