

THE MARVELOUS INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

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I The 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

The influence of the Bible is worldwide. Its mighty power has affected every department of human activity.

The contents of the Scriptures have supplied themes for the greatest poets, artists and musicians that the world has yet produced and has been the mightiest factor of all in shaping the moral progress of the human race.

Someone has said, "Draw a line around the nations which have the Bible and you will then have divided between barbarism and civilization, between thrift and poverty, between selfishness and charity, between oppression and freedom, between life and the shadow of death. Even Darwin had to concede the miraculous element in the triumphs of the missionaries of the Cross.

Influence Over Preachers

The Bible has had a far-reaching influence. In the 19th century, a Presbyterian missionary named Dr. John Geddie went to the South Pacific island of New Hebrides. To this day, there can be found this inscription to him which reads:

"When he landed in 1848,
There were no Christians.
When he left in 1872,
There were no heathen."

A Baptist circuit riding preacher in 1803 wrote in his correspondence: "Every day I travel I have to swim through creeks or swamps, and I am wet from head to feet, and some days from morning to night I am dripping with water... I have rheumatism in all my joints... What I have suffered in body and mind my pen is not able to communicate to you. But this I can say: While my body is wet with water and chilled with cold, my soul is filled with heavenly fire, and I can say with St. Paul: But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."

The true story of the 'Mutiny on the Bounty' shows the transformation wrought by the Book. Nine mutineers with six native men and twelve native (Tahitian) women put ashore on Pitcairn Island in 1790. One sailor soon began distilling alcohol, and the little colony was plunged into debauchery and vice. Ten years later, only one white man survived surrounded by native women and half-bred children. In an old chest from the *Bounty*, this sailor one day found a Bible. He began to read it and then to teach it to the others. The result was that his own life and ultimately the lives of all those in the colony was changed. Discovered in 1808 by the U.S.S. Topas, Pitcairn had become a prosperous community with no jail, no whiskey, no crime and no laziness.

When missionary Robert Moffat arrived in Capetown, South Africa, he was immediately warned about the demonic cannibal known as Africamer, chief of the Namaquas, the very tribe that Moffat had come to evangelize. It was said of this chief that he was such an incarnate fiend that he actually made a virtue of cruelty and a diversion of murder, killing men in order to make drum-heads of their skins and drinking-cups of their skulls. The audacity of his crimes created a reign of terror throughout the country where he dwelt, and neither savage chiefs nor colonial governments had found out any way to tame him. But Robert Moffat went to him in spite of the most earnest warnings to the contrary. He conquered him, not with carnal weapons, but with the living Word which produced in him a sweet and Christ-like response. The demon of cruelty became a meek disciple of Christ.

When Moffat took his "trophy of God's grace" back to Capetown, the citizens were astonished, having given the missionary up for dead. The Colonial exclaimed, "This is the 8th wonder of the world."

George Whitefield, an 18th century Methodist preacher, often preached in the open air to tens of thousands of people. Over 10,000 residents of White Clay Creek, PA, listened in silence as he preached. They stood there for 1 1/2 hours - in steady rain - in December! In Philadelphia, over 15,000 people attended his preaching when that city had only 12,000 citizens.

The unannounced arrival of his preaching would stir the countryside. An illiterate farmer named Nathan Cole has left us his personal account of such an experience: Now it pleased God to send mr whitefield into this land & ... i longed to see & hear him ... & then one morning all on a Suding there came a messenger & said mr whitefield ... is to preach at middletown this morning at 10 o'clock i was in my field at work i dropt my tool that i had in my hand & run home and throu my house and bad my wife to get ready quick to go and hear mr whitefield preach at middletown & run to my pastire for my hors with all my might fearing i should be late to hear him & took up my wife & went forward as fast as i thought ye hors could bear & when my hors began to be out of breth i would get down and put my wife on ye saddel and i bid her ride as fast as she could & not Stop or Slack for me except i bad her & so i would run until i was almost out of breth & then mount my hors again... fearing we should be too late to hear ye Sarmon for for we had twelve miles to ride dubble in little more than an our. i saw before me a cloud or fog i first thought of from ye great river but as i came nearer ye road i heard a noise something like a low rumbling thunder & i presently found out it was ye rumbling of horses feet coming down ye road & this Cloud was a Cloud of dust made by the running of horses feet & when i came within about twenty rods of ye road i could see men and horses slipping along - it was like a steady stream of horses and their riders scarcely a hors more than one length behind another - i found a vacance between two horses to slip in my hors & my wife said law our cloaths will be all spoiled see how they look - & when we gat down ye old meeting house thare was a great multitude it was said to be 3 or 4000 & when i looked towards ye great river i see ye fery boats running swift forward and backward - when i see mr whitefield come up upon ye scaffold he looked almost angellical a young slim slender youth before thousands of people and with a bold undainted countenance & my hearing how god was with him everywhere as he came alone it solemnized my mind and put me in a trembling fear before he began to preach for he looked as if he was Clothed with authority from ye great god and a sweet solemnity sat upon his brow and my hearing him preach gave me a heart wound & by gods blessing my old foundation was broken up & i see my righteousness would not save me.

William Seward, an aide to George Whitefield, "heard of a drinking club that had a negro boy attending it who used to mimic people for their entertainment. One day they asked him to mimic George Whitefield. He was unwilling to do so - but they insisted upon it. He stood up and said, 'I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, except ye repent, you will all be damned.' This unexpected speech broke up the club - which has not met since."

Influence Over World Leaders

Daniel chapter 4 records the account of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon who is abased and turns to God and is saved.

Cyrus, King of Persia was the next ruling emperor. He had read Isaiah 44:28 - 45:5 where God through the inspiration of Scripture writes his name down 140 years before the destruction of the temple. God called Cyrus, "my shepherd." Josephus, the Jewish historian stated, "When Cyrus had read Isa. 44:28, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was written."

Alexander the Great only ruled for 12 years. During his reign, after a conquest in Gaza, he was headed on his way to Jerusalem. Jaddua, the high priest, had had a conflict with Alexander, as Alexander had felt that he had disobeyed him and was mad at him. Jaddua was in agony and terror thinking of meeting up with him. The High Priest had all the Jews pray and offer sacrifices to God, asking God to protect and deliver them. God then warned Jaddua in a dream that he should take courage and adorn the city, open the gates and that the High Priest and the priests should dress in their priestly robes without fear of consequences. He awoke and they did so and went out in procession to meet Alexander the Great. When Alexander saw them, he stopped and saluted them. The King of Syria thought that he had lost his mind. Asked why he should adore the High Priest of the Jews, Alexander replied, "I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood, for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, that I should bring this army under the divine conduct...." When he went up to the Temple, he offered sacrifice to God according to the direction of the High Priest.

Alexander the Great was shown the Book of Daniel (Dan. 8:3-8, 20-21) where one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians. He supposed himself to be the person intended.

Influence Over History's Most Outstanding People

Abraham Lincoln: I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book.

W.E. Gladstone: I have known ninety five of the world's great men in my time, and of these eighty seven were followers of the Bible. The Bible is stamped with a Specialty of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors.

George Washington: It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.

Napoleon: The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.

Queen Victoria: That book accounts for the supremacy of England.

Daniel Webster: If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

Thomas Carlyle: The Bible is the truest utterance that ever came by alphabetic letter from the soul of man, through which, as through a window divinely opened, all men can look into the stillness of eternity, and discern in glimpses their far distant, long forgotten home.

Thomas Huxley: The Bible has been the Magna Carta of the poor and oppressed. The human race is not in a position to dispense with it.

W. H. Seward: The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible.

Patrick Henry: The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.

Andrew Jackson: That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests.

Robert E. Lee: In all my perplexities and distresses the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.

Lord Tennyson: Bible reading is an education in itself.

Horace Greeley: It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.

John Quincy Adams: So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.

Immanuel Kant: The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity.

Charles Dickens: The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world.

Sir William Herschel: All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the Sacred Scriptures.

Sir Isaac Newton: There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.

Goethe: Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in even greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires: beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines forth in the Gospels, it will not go.

Influence In the Founding of the U.S.A.

Patrick Henry said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ."

George Washington even made obedience to God vital to our national survival in his first inaugural address given on April 30, 1789: "It would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes...."

Samuel Adams said, "The rights of the colonists as Christians... may be best understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be promulgated in the New Testament."

John Quincy Adams on July 4, 1821, said, "From the days of the Declaration... they (the American people) were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledged as the rules of their conduct."

Harvard University in 1646, adopted "Rules and Precepts" and several of these were: "Every one (i.e. students) shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of language and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths...."

Noah Webster, the father of American education, said, "In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed... No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people... When I speak of the Christian religions as the basis of government, I do not mean an ecclesiastical establishment, a creed, or rites, forms and ceremonies, or any compulsion of conscience. I mean primitive Christianity in its simplicity as taught by Christ and the apostles, consisting in a belief in the being, perfection, and moral government of God; in the revelation of His will to men, as their supreme rule of action; in man's accountability to God for his conduct in this life; and in the indispensable obligation of all men to yield entire obedience to God's commands in the moral law and in the gospel. This belief and this practice may consist with different

forms of church government, which not being essential to Christianity, need not enter into any system of education."

In 1777, Patrick Allison, the chaplain of Congress, placed a petition before the Congress, asking for immediate relief. A special committee was set up to examine the request, and they reported: "That the use of the Bible is so universal and its importance so great that your committee refer the above to the consideration of Congress, and if Congress shall not think it expedient to order the importation of types and paper, your committee recommend that Congress will order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles."

The United States has turned against its foundation of a Christian nation as it has: kicked prayer out of the public schools in the early 1960's, legalized abortion in 1973, considered homosexuality an alternative lifestyle, has had a recent court decision to try to force the acceptance of marriage between Sodomites, taken the 10 commandments out of a court in Alabama, and has had the Pledge of Allegiance challenged because it states that we are one nation under God.

Roe v. Wade was decided by the Supreme Court. This is the same venue that Supreme Court Justice David Josiah Brewer stated in 1892, "These and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation." (The Church of the Holy Trinity vs. United States)

In the U.S.A., the Bible has influence in other areas. Our judicial system is based upon Biblical principles. Laws against murder, rape, stealing and sodomy are all based upon the Bible. The family unit originated in the garden of Eden. Even blue laws and businesses closing on Sunday have their roots in the Bible.

Influence Within the Catholic Church

It was the Bible that influenced the "Reformation". From 1000 to 1600, the Catholic Church was an oppressive and corrupt political and religious system. Yet, within the Catholic Church, many priests got saved and started the period known as the "Reformation."

John Wycliff is often called the "Morning Star of the Reformation." He translated the Latin Vulgate into English. He died in 1384. In 1415 at the Council of Constance, his heresies were reviewed and it was ordered that his body be burned. His body was dug up, his bones burned and his ashes dumped into the Brook Avon. His main crime was translating the Bible into the language of the common man.

Thomas Fuller said, "This Brook Avon has carried his ashes - the Avon flows into the Severn River which flows into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. Thus the ashes of Wycliff are an emblem of his doctrine - which is now dispersed all over the world."

On May 2, 1507, Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, was prepared to offer his first mass. He took his place before the altar and began to recite the introductory portion of the mass until he came to the words, "We offer unto thee, the living, the true, the eternal God." Later he said, "At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought

to myself, 'With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround him. At his nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable pygmy, say I want this, I ask for that? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal and the true God.'

Luther struggled with sin and its guilt. He once spent twenty consecutive hours on his knees confessing his sins, and upon arising was still no less insecure in his relationship to Christ. Once he was climbing Pilate's stairs on hands and knees repeating a Pater Noster for each one and kissing each step for good measure in the hope of delivering a soul from purgatory. The stairs were climbed, the Pater Nosters were repeated, the steps were kissed. At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, "Who knows whether it is so." In 1516, Luther was given an Erasmus' Greek-Latin Bible and trusted Christ as he read, "The just shall live by faith."

Influence of Other Books Wane

The power of man's books soon wanes and disappears. With but few exceptions the productions of the human intellect enjoy a very brief existence. As a general rule the writings of man within fifty years of their first public appearance lie untouched on the top shelves of our libraries. Man's writings are like himself - dying creatures. Man comes on to the stage of this world, plays his part in the drama of life, influences the audience while he is acting, but is soon forgotten as soon as the curtain falls upon his brief career; so it is with his writings. While they are fresh and new they amuse, interest or instruct, as the case may be, and then they die a natural death. Even the few exceptions to this rule only exert a very limited influence, their power is circumscribed; they are unread by the great majority, yea, are unknown to the largest portion of our race. But how different with God's Book! The written Word, like the Living Word is "The same yesterday, today and forever." Unlike any other book, it has made its way into all countries and speaks with equal clearness, directness and force to all men in their mother tongue. The Bible never becomes antiquated, its vitality never diminishes and its influence is more irresistible and universal today than it was two thousand years ago.

Such facts as these declare with no uncertain voice that the Bible is endued with the same Divine life and energy as its Author, for in no other way can we account for its marvelous influence through the centuries and its mighty power upon the world.

Influence For You

The Bible has influenced preachers, world leaders, statesmen, peasants and countries. It will continue to influence today because it is, "The Word of God, which effectual worketh in them that believe." Read the Book of God daily for it to influence your life and change you from the inside out.

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, this is the place to start. The Bible, a spiritual book works in the hearts of those who have given their heart to Christ. I gave my heart and soul to Jesus Christ over twenty years ago and the results have been life changing.

May you find peace, joy and forgiveness in Christ. Jesus said, "He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Trust Him today. In prayer turn from your sin & ask Christ to save you & trust His blood to forgive your sins.