

On Bible Study and Book Reading

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of studying the Bible and prioritizing it above all other books, while also encouraging selective reading and seeking God's blessing.

Scripture: Job 33:23, Psalm 12:6, Psalm 19:7, Jeremiah 15:16

Topics: "Bible Study", "Importance of Scripture"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the importance of diligent Bible study, urging believers to engage with the entire Scripture rather than just favorite passages. He warns against relying too heavily on commentaries and encourages readers to view the Bible as the ultimate source of divine truth. While acknowledging the value of other good literature, Bonar cautions against light reading, particularly novels, which he believes can harm spiritual growth and distract from the Bible. He advocates for a selective approach to reading, ensuring that the Bible remains the primary focus and source of wisdom. Bonar concludes by encouraging readers to seek God's blessing on their reading and to cultivate a deeper love for the Scriptures.

Transcript

On Bible Study

Do not skim it or read it, but study it, every word of it; study the whole Bible, Old Testament and New; not your favourite chapters merely, but the complete Word of God from beginning to end. Do not trouble yourself with commentators; they may be of use if kept in their place, but they are not your guides; your guide is 'the Interpreter,' the one among a thousand (Job 33:23), who will lead you into all truth, and keep you from all error.

Not that you are to read no book but the Bible. All that is true and good is worth the reading, if you have time for it; and all, if properly used, will help you in your study of the Scriptures. A Christian does not shut his eyes to the natural scenes of beauty spread around him. He does not cease to admire the hills, or plains, or rivers, or forests of earth, because he has learned to love the God that made them; nor does he turn away from books of science or true poetry, because he has discovered one book truer, more precious, and more poetical than all the rest together.

In so far, then, as time allows or opportunity presents, let us 'seek and search out by word concerning all things that are done under heaven.' But let the Bible be to us the book of books, the one book in all the world, whose every wisdom is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for

what it really is, the revelation of the thoughts of God given us in the words of God. Were it only the book of divine thoughts and human words, it would profit little, for we never could be sure whether the words really represented the thoughts; nay, we might be quite sure that man would fail in his words when attempting to embody divine thoughts; and that, therefore, if we have only man's words, that is, man's translation of the divine thoughts, we shall have one of the poorest and most incorrect of all books... But, knowing that we have divine thoughts embodied in divine words, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume, assured that we shall find in all its teachings the perfection of wisdom, and in its language the most accurate expression of that wisdom that the finite speech of man can utter.

Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psalm 19:7; 12:6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night. They never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. Though it is right and profitable, as I have said, to read other books, if they are true and good, yet beware of reading too many. Do not let man's book thrust God's book into a corner. Do not let commentaries smother the text; nor let the true and the good shut out the truer and the better.

On Book Reading

Specially beware of light reading. Shun novels; they are the literary curse of the age; they are to the soul what ardent spirits are to the body. If you be a parent, keep novels out of the way of your children. But whether you be a parent or not, neither read them yourself, nor set an example of novel-reading to others.

Don't let novels lie on your table, or be seen in your hand, even in a railway carriage. The 'light reading for the rail' has done deep injury to many a young man and woman. The light literature of the day is working a world of harm; vitiating the taste of the young, enervating their minds, unfitting them for life's plain work, eating out their love of the Bible, teaching them a false morality, and creating in the soul an unreal standard of truth, and beauty, and love. Don't be too fond of the newspaper. Yet read it, that you may know both what man is doing and what God is doing; and extract out of all you read matter for thought and prayer. Avoid works which jest with what is right or wrong, lest you unconsciously adopt a false test of truth and duty, namely, ridicule, and so become afraid to do right for right's sake alone; dreading the world's sneer, and undervaluing a good conscience and the approving smile of God. Let your reading be always select; and whatever you read, begin with seeking God's blessing on it. But see that your relish for the Bible be above every other enjoyment, and the moment you begin to feel greater relish for any other book, lay it down till you have sought deliverance from such a snare, and obtained from the Holy Spirit an intenser relish, a keener appetite for the Word of God (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 19:7-10).

-Edited from Chapter 6 of Follow the Lamb by Horatius Bonar, 1861.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/horatius-bonar/on-bible-study-and-book-reading/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net