

Testimonies of the Bible

(From *Our Bible* by Charles Leach, 1898)

United States Presidents

George Washington, 1st President:

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

Above all, the pure and benign light of revelation has had a meliorating influence on mankind, and increased the blessings of society.

I now make my earnest prayer that God would be most graciously pleased to dispose as all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the divine Author of our blessed religion.

John Adams, 2nd President:

It contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries that I have seen; and such parts as I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy I postpone for future investigation.

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President:

I always have said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.

John Quincy Adams, 6th President:

The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. The Bible is the Book of all others to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice through and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters every day, and never to be intermitted except by some overruling necessity . . . I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year . . . It is an inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue . . .

The earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society.

Andrew Jackson, 7th President:

The Bible is the rock on which the Republic rests.

Zachary Taylor, 12th President:

It was for the love of the truths of this great and good Book that our fathers abandoned their native shore for the wilderness. Animated by its lofty principles, they toiled and suffered till the desert blossomed as the rose.

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President:

I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book upon reason that you can and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man . . . In regard to the Great Book, I have only to say that it is the best Book which God has given to man.

Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President:

Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties. Write its precepts upon your hearts and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future.

Benjamin Harrison, 23rd President:

If you take out of your statutes, your constitutions, your family life all that is taken from the Sacred Book, what would there be left to bind society together?

William McKinley, 25th President:

The more profoundly we study this wonderful Book, and the more closely we observe its divine precepts, the better citizens we will become and the higher will be our destiny as a nation.

The teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally—I do not mean figuratively, I mean literally—impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed.

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President:

Almost every man who has by his life-work added to the sum of human achievement of which the race is proud, of which our people are proud, almost every such man has based his life-work largely upon the teachings of the Bible. The great debt of the English-speaking peoples everywhere is to the translation of the Bible that we all know—I trust I can say, all here know—in our homes; the Bible as it was put forth in English three centuries ago. No other book of any kind ever written in English—perhaps no other book ever written in any other tongue—has ever so affected the whole life of a people as this Authorized Version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking peoples.

I ask that the Bible be studied for the sake of the breadth it must give to every man who studies it.

Woodrow Wilson, 28th President:

To my mind the colporteurs, the agents of the Bible Society, tramping through country-sides or traveling by every sort of conveyance, in every sort of land, carrying with them little cargoes of books containing the Word of God, and spreading them, seem like the shuttles in a great loom that is weaving the spirits of men together. A hundred years cannot accomplish this miracle, a hundred years cannot realize that vision. But if the weaving goes on, if the light continues to be spread, if men do not lose heart in this great enterprise, it will some day be accomplished, and a light will shine upon the earth in which men cannot go astray.

America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture. I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask of every man and woman in this audience that from this night on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great book of revelations—that if they would see America free and pure, they will make their own spirits free and pure by this baptism of the Holy Scripture.

A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this . . . There are a good many problems before the American people today, and before me as a President, but I expect to find the solution of those problems just in the proportion that I am faithful in the study of the Word of God.

It is very difficult indeed for a man or for a boy, who knows the Scripture, ever to get away from it. It haunts him like an old song. It follows him like the memory of his mother. It forms a part of the warp and woof of his life.

Warren G. Harding, 29th President:

Both as literature and as inspiration, the Bible has a value with which no other work can be compared, and every activity that expands and popularizes the knowledge of it is extremely worth while.

I have always believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, whereby they have become the expression to men of the word and will of God. I believe that from every point of view the study of the Bible is one of the most worthy to which men may devote themselves, and that, in proportion as they know and understand it, their lives and actions will be better.

Testimonies of Statesmen and Generals

William Gladstone, Prime Minister of England during reign of Queen Victoria:

If I am asked what is the remedy for the sorrows of the heart—what a man should chiefly look to in his progress through life as the power that is to sustain him under trials, and enable him manfully to confront his afflictions—I must point to something which in a well-known hymn is called ‘the old, old story’, told in an old, old Book, and taught with an old, old teaching, which is the greatest and best gift ever given to mankind.

I have known ninety-five great men of the world in my time, and of these eighty-seven were all followers of the Bible . . . My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind into contact with Divine Revelation.

Daniel Webster, American Statesman:

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 our glory in profound obscurity.

Charles Fairbanks, Former Vice-President of the U.S.:

The more the Bible is put into the minds and hearts and daily lives of the people, the less concern we may have with respect to our political laws. Take out of our lives the Scriptures and you would strike an irreparable blow to our national progress and to those high ideals which we associate with America and Americans.

William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State in President Wilson’s cabinet:

Wherever the moral standard is being lifted up—wherever life is becoming larger in the vision that directs it and richer in its fruitage, the improvement is traceable to the Bible and to the influence of the God and Christ of whom the Bible tells.

Thomas R. Marshall, Former Vice-President of the U.S.:

Whenever he finds his hands upon the Bible he finds something not only secure but something that lights up his own life and the lives of those about him. It becomes, indeed, a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his pathway. He may stumble and err and wander in forbidden paths, but it will bring him back most assuredly to the King’s highways . . .

That this Bible ought to be printed in every tongue, treasured by every human being, and exalted in every home, goes without saying – and no sting of any creed is in the statement. It contains wise counsel for the statesman and comfort for the criminal. There is no age, no clime, no race, and no condition about which it does not speak words of wisdom, of encouragement and consolation.

But more particularly ought this Book, in this land, to be exalted high. If I were to have my way, I would take the torch out of the hand of the Statue of Liberty, in New York Harbor, and in its stead place an open Bible.

Champ Clark, Former Speaker of the House:

The Bible, considered entirely apart from its religious value . . . is of inestimable value. Considered solely as literature, it is the greatest depository of splendid literature, it is the greatest depository of splendid literature in the wide, wide world. It is the best book ever put between covers—to quote from before judges, before juries, in

Congress, on the stump, on the lecture platform, or anywhere else. A fitting quotation from the Bible goes like a bullet to its mark . . .

When I get brain fog, which frequently occurs there in that large, tumultuous assembly, I read King Solomon's Proverbs and St. Paul's Epistles, as an intellectual tonic. There's nothing like it in the literature of the world . . . If you want to learn the best English that there is extant, read the Bible . . .

Napoleon, French General and Emperor:

I never omit to read it [the Bible], and every day with the same pleasure. Nowhere is to be found such a series of beautiful ideas, admirable moral maxims, which produce in one's soul the same emotion which one experiences in contemplating the infinite expanse of the skies resplendent upon a summer's night with all the brilliance of the stars. Not only is one's mind absorbed, it is controlled, and the soul can never go astray with this Book for its guide.

Lord Roberts, British Field Marshall:

You will find in this little book guidance when you are in health, comfort when you are in sickness, and strength when you are in adversity.

Marshall Foch, hero of WWI and Generalissimo of the Allied armies:

The Bible is certainly the best preparation that you can give to an American soldier about to into battle, to sustain his magnificent ideal and his faith.

General Garibaldi, the great Italian soldier and patriot:

The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible. That will bring us the reality of freedom.

General Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Southern forces in the American Civil War:

The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength.

General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of American Forces in World War I:

I am glad to see that every man in the Army is to have a Testament. Its teachings will fortify us for our great work.

Admiral A. T. Mahan, American Navy:

Speaking after much experience of bad and good, of religion and irreligion, I assure you, with the full force of the conviction of a lifetime, that to one who has mastered the Word of God, even imperfectly, it brings a light, a motive, a strength, and a support which nothing else does.

Educators

Professor Huxley, to the London School Board:

Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book [the Bible] has been woven into the life of all that is noblest and best in our history, and that it has become the national epic of our race; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary forms; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind, who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations and of a great past, stretching back to the farthest limits of the oldest nations in the world . . .

The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and of the oppressed. Down to modern times, no State has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account; in which the duties, so much more than the privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

Nowhere is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State, in the long run, depends upon the righteousness of the citizen, so strongly laid down. The Bible is the most democratic book in the world.

John Ruskin:

All that I have taught of Art, everything that I have written, whatever greatness there has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life, has simply been due to the fact that, when I was a child, my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart.

Again:

Read your Bible—make it your daily business to obey it in all you understand. To my early knowledge of the Bible I owe the best part of my taste in literature.

Thomas Carlyle:

There is no book like the Bible; there never was and there never will be such another.

Jean Jacques Rousseau:

I must confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me . . . If it had been the invention of men, the inventory would be greater than the greatest heroes.

Immanuel Kant, German philosopher:

The existence of the Bible as a book for the people is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced.

Heinrich Heine, German Jewish poet and critic:

I attribute my enlightenment entirely and simply to the reading of a book . . . and this book is the Book, the Bible. With right is it named the Holy Scriptures. He who has lost his God can find Him again in this Book, and he who has never known Him is here struck by the breath of the Divine Word.

Rajah Sir Harnam Singh of India:

I think it may be said that modern educated India is to a great extent the product of Christian thought and teaching which have been imbibed from Christian literature through missionary institutions. One of the Brahmo Samaj religious books consists to a great extent of quotations from the Bible; and non-Christians acknowledge Christ as one of the greatest teachers, and look upon his life as most exemplary. The Bible rises above all national and racial distinction and makes its appeal to the general heart of humanity.

A Brahmin of South India said:

Where do the English people get their knowledge, intelligence, cleverness and power. It is their Bible that gives it to them. And now they bring it to us, translate it into our language and say, "Take it and see if it is not good." Of one thing I am convinced, that, do with it what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christian's Bible that will sooner or later work out the regeneration of our land.

James A. Froude, an English historian:

The Bible, thoroughly known, is a literature of itself—the rarest and richest in all departments of thought and imagination which exists.

Lord Macaulay said that the English Bible was a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the extent of its beauty and power.

Charles Dickens, in a letter to his son, said:

I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons and with the very same hopes that made me write an easy account of it for you when you were a little child—because it is the best book that ever was or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided.

Hall Caine, a famous English novelist:

There is no book in the world like it, and the finest novels ever written fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells. Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not of my creation, but are taken from the Bible.

Arthur Henry Hallam, an English essayist:

I see that the Bible fits into every fold of the human heart.

Count Tolstoy, the Russian author:

I do not know a book which gives in such compact and poetic form every phase of human ideas as the Bible. Without the Bible the education of the child in the present state of society is impossible.

Dostoevsky, another Russian author:

I recommend you to read the whole Bible through in the Russian translation. The book makes a remarkable impression when one thus reads it. One gains, for one thing, the conviction that humanity possesses, and can possess, no other book of equal significance.

Coleridge, the poet:

For more than a thousand years the Bible collectively taken has gone hand in hand with civilization, science, law—in short, with the moral and intellectual cultivation of the species, always supporting and often leading the way.

When **Sir Walter Scott** was dying, he said to his friend Lockhart, “Bring me the book,” and when Lockhart said, “What book?” Sir Walter said, “The Book—the Bible; there is only one.”

Charles A. Dana, former editor of the New York Sun:

Of all books, the most indispensable and the most useful, the one whose knowledge is most effective, is the Bible. There is no book from which more valuable lessons can be learned.

George Herbert:

The Bible? That’s the Book, the Book indeed,

The Book of Books

On which who looks,

As he should do, aright, shall never need

Wish for a better light

To guide him in the night.

Sir Isaac Newton:

We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy.

Jacob Gould Shurman, President of Cornell University:

The Bible is the most important document in the world's history. No man can be wholly uneducated who really knows the Bible, nor can anyone be considered a truly educated man who is ignorant of it.

Sir William Jones, a great orientalist and linguist who knew 28 languages:

The Scriptures contain, independent of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains, both of poetry and eloquence, than would be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist are connected by a chain of compositions which bears no resemblance in form or style to any that can be produced from the States of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabic learning. The antiquity of these compositions no man doubts, and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine productions, and consequently inspired.

Dr. J. H. Penniman, Professor at University of Pennsylvania:

The greatest book is the Bible, and the reason for the place assigned to it is that it contains interpretations of human life, actual and ideal, which reveal man to himself, in his joys and sorrows, his triumphs and his defeats, his aspirations and his possibilities, his relations to other men, and, comprehending and enveloping all, his relations to God. Men may differ about what the Bible is, but the fact remains that for centuries millions of men, of all grades of intelligence and learning, have believed that the Bible speaks to them as no other book has ever spoken, and that what it says comes with an authority derived from God himself. The primary spiritual problem of man is his relations to God. Men, everywhere, recognize the existence of an intelligent power outside and higher than themselves that controls and regulates the universe. The individual who doubts or denies the existence of God is exceptional, and his opinions are at variance with human belief and experience. The Bible, concerned as it is in its component parts with the revelation of God to man, and the relation of man to God, has held the attention of men because it is true to the truths of life and satisfying to the yearnings of the human spirit. Men have found it so, and there is an abiding faith that men will continue to find it so . . .

Reverence for the Bible is increased by a knowledge of the history of its transmission down the centuries, through many languages, and many versions, preserving always its distinctive qualities unimpaired by the frailties of human copyists, and unchanged through the lapse of time.