

R.A. Torrey:

In the third place the Bible differs from all other books in its power. There is perhaps no other place where the supremacy and solitariness of the Bible shines out as in its power. Col. Ingersoll once said in Chicago that the money expended in teaching the supernatural religion of the Bible was wasted, and advised the ministers to "take for a series of sermons the history of the philosophy, of the art, and the genius of the Greeks. Let him tell," he continued, "of the wondrous metaphysics, myths, and religions of India and Egypt. Let him make his congregation conversant with the philosophies of the world, with the great thinkers, the great poets, the great artists, the great inventors, the captains of industry, and the soldiers of progress." This suggested scheme of Col. Ingersoll's was no new scheme, it has been tried over and over again, and I challenge any man who has eyes and is honest to say that the pulpits that have tried it have the power to elevate, save and gladden, that the pulpits have that preach the supernatural religion of the old Bible. The man who thus talks is either talking about something of which he has made no thorough and candid study, or else he is deliberately shutting his eyes to very evident facts. In either case he is playing the hypocrite in posing as a teacher.

In what directions does the Bible show a power that no other book or books possess ?

1. First of all, in its saving power. Does it need any proof that the Bible has a saving power that no other book possesses, and that all other books together do not possess?

a. The Bible has a unique saving power in individual lives. What book or books can match the Bible's record of men and women saved from sin and vice in

all their forms, saved from drunkenness, drugs, lust, greed, ruffianism, barbarism, meanness, selfishness, by the power of this Book? Worthless sots transformed into honest citizens and fathers; degraded prostitutes transformed into holy women of God; savages who drank blood from human skulls transformed into noble lovers of friends and foes; murderers transformed into ministering angels. Single verses of this book have more saving power than all other books put together. John 3:16 has saved more men from sin to holiness, from degradation to honour, from bondage to the Devil to sonship of God, than all books outside of the Bible. Try and account for it as you may, the fact stands and does not admit of a moment's honest denial or question.

b. But the saving power of the Bible is not limited to the lives of individuals. It has saving power in national life. Try to obscure the fact as you may, all that is best in America, Germany, and England is due to this Book, and in our own day nations have been lifted out of savagery into Christian civilization by this book. If this Book had been heeded the awful cataclysm of war that is devastating Germany, France and England to-day would have been avoided. The undermining of faith in this Book is the real cause of the present murderous war with all its unspeakable and immeasurable calamities, atrocities and horrors.

2. But the Bible has not only a saving power that no other book possesses, it has also a comforting power that no other book possesses. What book like this can stay the human heart in sickness and adversity, and comfort it in the bereavement that takes from us the light of our eyes and the joy of our homes. There is no heart wound for which the Bible has not a balsam. I hold in my hand a New Testament that is very precious to me because it was the gift of my mother to my grandmother, my father's mother, which was the stay of her life in her closing years. On the title-page of his Bible is written in my mother's hand, "Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal." This is true, but thank God something better is true, and that is, earth has no sorrows that the Bible cannot heal even in the life that now is.

3. Furthermore, the Bible has a joy-giving power no other book possesses. There is no other joy so great, so exceeding, so overflowing, and so enduring as those know who study and discover the truth contained in this Book. This is a fact that any of you can discover by observation, and better yet, that all of you can know if you will by blessed experience. There are many who have sought joy wherever it was to be found, in pleasure, in study, and in sin, and have at last found a joy in the Bible they found nowhere else. There is a countless multitude who have been lifted out of awful depths of despair into lofty heights of unutterable joy by the truths this Book contains, and the speaker of this morning is one of them.

4. The Bible has a wisdom-giving power that no other book possesses. "The entrance of thy words giveth light." (Ps. 119 : 130.) I have known people of very meagre educational advantages but who have studied the Bible, who have more wisdom in the things of greatest practical and eternal import than many very learned men who have neglected this Book of matchless wisdom.

5. The Bible has a courage-giving power no other book possesses. No other book has made so many and such

peerless heroes, it has made them too out of most unpromising stuff. It has transformed beardless boys and tender maidens into heroes.

6. The Bible has a power to inspire activity that no other book possesses. It makes lazy men industrious; half alive men fully alive. There are said to be but two things of which a professional tramp is afraid, water and work, but I have seen the very tramp from whom I got this information transformed into a man of untiring industry by the matchless teaching of this Book.

IV. IN ITS UNIVERSAL ADAPTABILITY.

The Bible differs from all other books in its universal adaptability. Other books fit certain classes or certain types, or certain races of men, but the Bible fits men universally.

1. It fits all nations. No nation has ever been discovered that the Bible does not fit. Charles Darwin, the greatest naturalist of his day, thought he had discovered in the Terra del Fuegians a people the Bible would not fit, and frankly stated that missionary work among them would be in vain. His exact words written after his visit to Patagonia were, "Nothing can be done by mission work ; all the pains bestowed upon the natives will be thrown away, they never can be civilized." But more humble believers in the universal adaptation of the Bible and the gospel it contains thought differently, and proved their faith and so thoroughly convinced Charles Darwin by facts of his mistake, that he became a regular subscriber to the funds of the society they represented.

2. The Bible not only fits all nations, but it fits all ages. It is the child's book, the young man's book, the book of the middle-aged, and the book of the old.

3. The Bible fits all classes. It fits the poor and it fits the rich. It fits the palace and it fits the garret. It fits the learned and it fits the ignorant. It fits the nobleman and it fits the peasant. It fits Gladstone, and James D. Dana, and Eomanes, and Neander, and it fits the man so illiterate that he can scarce spell out its words.

4. The Bible fits all experiences. It is the book for the hour of gladness, and the book for the hour of sadness ; the book for the day of victory, and the book for the day of defeat; the book for the day in which we have achieved the greatest moral triumph, and for the day when we have fallen deepest into sin; the book for the day of clearest faith, and the book for the day of darkest doubt; the book for the wedding day and the book for the day of funerals. There is not an experience in life wherein the Bible does not have the message which we most need. To that fact there are tens of thousands of people of all classes in many nations ready to testify. The testimony is from such a host of witnesses and such competent witnesses that the only one who can doubt it is the man who is bound he won't believe.