

Articles and Sermons :: "SEEK YE OUT OF THE BOOK OF THE LORD, AND READ," Boston

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SEVERAL THINGS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE
PRE-SUPPOSED IN THESE WORDS,
ISAIAH 34:16. "SEEK YE OUT OF
THE BOOK OF THE LORD, AND READ,"

1. That man has lost his way, and needs direction to find it, Psal.119:176. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant." Miserable man is bemisted in a vain world, which is a dark place, and has as much need of the scriptures to direct him, as one has of a light in dark, 2 Peter 1:9. What a miserable case is that part of the world in that wants the Bible? They are vain in their imaginations, and grope in the dark, but cannot find the way of salvation. In no better case are those to whom it has not come in power.
2. That man is in hazard of being led farther and farther wrong. This made the spouse say, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" There is a subtle devil, a wicked world, corrupt lusts within one's own breast, to lead him out of the right way, that we had need to give over, and take this guide. There are many false lights in the world, which, if followed, will lead the traveller into a mire, and leave him there.
3. That men are slow of heart to understand the mind of God in his word. It will cost searching diligently ere we can take it up, John 5:39. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Our eyes are dim to the things of God, our apprehensions dull, and our judgment is weak. And therefore, because the iron is blunt, we must put too the more strength. We lost the sharpness of our sight in spiritual things in Adam; and our corrupt wills and carnal affections, that favour not the things of God, do more blind our judgments: and therefore it is a labour to us to find out what is necessary for our salvation.
4. That the book of the Lord has its difficulties, which are not to be easily solved. Therefore the Psalmist prays, "Open thou mine eyes. that I may see wondrous things out of thy law," Psal.119:18. Philip asked the eunuch, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?" There are depths there wherein an elephant may swim, and will exercise the largest capacities, with all the advantages they may be possessed of. God in his holy providence has so ordered it, to stain the pride of all glory; to make his word the liker himself, whom none can search out to perfection, and to sharpen the diligence of his people in their inquiries into it.
5. That yet we need highly to understand it, otherwise we would not be bidden search into it. "Of the times and seasons," says the apostle, "ye have no need that I write unto you;" and therefore he wrote not of them. There is a treasure in this field; we are called to dig for it; for though it be hid, yet we must have it, or we will pine away in our spiritual poverty.
6. That we may gain from it by diligent inquiry. The holy humble heart will not be always sent empty away from these wells of salvation, when it plies itself to draw. There are shallow places in these waters of the sanctuary. where lambs may wade.