

Nurtured by the Light of the Word



First Window on the Word

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

They knew that John C. Fitzpatrick wasn't dead—but he soon would be! The grizzly had all but finished him off.

The soldiers trying to chart a better northwest passage through the Rockies had to move on before the winter snows trapped them. They had no time to nurse a wounded man who was all but dead anyway. The captain, in this Richard Harris film reminiscent of *The Song of Hugh Glass*, bellowed, "Leave him!" They covered him with a thin layer of dirt and leaves and left him there to die.

But he didn't.

Somehow he dug himself out before the wolves found him or the bear came back. Fueled by a seething hatred that not even the Rocky Mountain winter could cool, he set out after the men who abandoned him. The dream of wreaking vengeance on the captain who he heard bark, "Leave him!" gave him energy even when he was hungry and aching from his wounds.

Fitzpatrick came across the remains of a pioneer camp. The people had been killed by Indians, their dwelling burned. Sifting through the wreckage looking for a tool, a weapon, a morsel of food, he found a slightly singed New Testament.

He began to read it on that season-long trek. At the end of each grueling day in the waning sunlight or by the flicker of his campfire, Fitzpatrick read the Testament.

By spring he had found the camp of his former comrades. He spotted the captain and shoved a gun barrel in the face of the man who had ordered, "Leave him!" But something had happened to the revenge seeker. All those evenings with the New Testament had changed him. Somehow the hatred had leaked out of his soul, and to the man who had bellowed, "Leave him!" the New Testament was saying, "Love him!" Fitzpatrick lowered his gun. "Captain, I have a gift for you." Then, with trembling hand, he gave him the New Testament and said, "Let's go home, Captain."

The Holy Scriptures have the power to transform. According to 2 Cor.

3:18, our key verse for this book, the glory of God in Christ shines forth from the Bible. Read all of chapter 3. The source of the transforming Light in verse 18 is the Holy Scriptures. It is the image of Christ found in the Bible that we are to reflect.

What does it take to keep a Christian going? E. Stanley Jones obviously knew. He was a leading missionary of the 20th century, with a ministry encircling the globe and reaching millions. For eight decades he tirelessly proclaimed to all who would listen, “Jesus is Lord.”

What fueled the fire of his soul and sustained him? He credited his “listening post” time. A rare photograph shows him at his quiet time sitting with his Bible, a notebook, and a pen. His powerful writings flowed from those early-morning periods of reading, meditating, and listening. He knew that the teachings from God’s Word are “more precious than gold . . . sweeter than honey” (Ps. 19:10).

Christianity is rooted in revelation. God speaks to us in many ways, but the most definitive is through the Bible. The Bible is God’s written Word, serving as the objective revelation by which other revelations are evaluated. We may be inspired by music, art, poetry, the writings of the saints, worship, great literature, a sunset, or a dream. But none of these will surpass the normative revelation found in Holy Scripture. If we are to grow in intimacy with God, we must be nurtured by His Word.

Like many others, John Wesley was a person who “soaked up life” from many different sources. He enjoyed reading as many books as he could get his hands on. But he came to see that while his night sky had many stars in it, there was only one North Star—the Bible. It was his fixed point of navigation on the sea of life. He referred to himself as *homo unis libri*—a man of one book. In his preface to his *Standard Sermons*, Wesley wrote, “O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! . . . Here is knowledge enough for me.”¹

We’re called to be “people of the Book” as much as E. Stanley Jones or John Wesley were. We’re invited to join with the saints of the ages in a regular and sustained contemplation of God’s Word. In a culture filled with multiple and conflicting voices, we need to be grounded in revelation. But more than that, we need a word to sustain us and to give us hope. God’s wisdom and nurture come to us through the Bible. Therefore, learning to study the Bible is a must for every Christian—every one.

∞ ————— READING AS AN EXPLORER ————— ∞

Window on the Word

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Ps. 119:105).

How we read the Bible is important. If we approach it in haste, the message will seem little more than a blur. If we approach it out of a cold sense of duty, we’ll fulfill an obligation while missing an encounter with the Living Word. If we approach it merely to increase our Bible knowledge, our heads will