

*The following article was taken from a booklet:*

## “Sermons – Speeches and So Forth”

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(1883-1958)*



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The title of this article:

## “How Large is Your Bible?”

(According to his daughter, these appear to be his notes in preparation of a sermon he planned to preach.)

### HOW LARGE IS YOUR BIBLE?

Christianity is the result of the teaching and work of the Divine Person, Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God and Son of Man. In the Bible, and in the Bible alone, we learn all that is to be known of his person, his teaching and his work. While the Christian religion is preeminently a religion of a person -- our faith is in a person, our love is for a person and our obedience is to a person -- yet we come into the knowledge of that Person through the Bible, which is the divine means by which the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Christ, love for Christ and obedience to Christ.

The One who is the reason for the Bible said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4)." We have a Bible because we have a Christ. When we ask the question, "How large is your Bible?" one is likely to answer, "My Bible is the whole sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments." This might be true in the sense that the printed book which you have and own does contain the whole sixty- six books of the Old and New Testaments. But our Bibles are no larger than that which we use. By the term, "use," we mean the part we read, study and meditate upon as the means of communion with God and the means of strengthening our faith in him.

The Bible is a revelation from God, and it is a revelation of God. Through our knowledge of the Christ and God's purposes in him, we come to know the ways of God. There is no part of the Bible from which Christ is absent. He, after all, is the subject of holy scriptures -- the entire body of the sacred writings is "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of

prophecy.(Revelation 19:10) "Jesus told unbelieving Jews that the Old Testament scriptures bear witness of him, and that Moses wrote of him (John 5:39,46).

To the young preacher, Timothy, Paul said, "From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:15)." It is evident that the holy scriptures which Timothy had known from his babyhood were the scriptures of the Old Testament. The New Testament was not completed and perhaps none of it was written when Timothy was a child. Yet, these Old Testament scriptures, we are told, are able to make men wise unto salvation that is in Jesus Christ. So the idea that we can today close up entirely, or neglect the study and meditation upon the Old Testament scriptures is false. To say the least, this practice deprives us of much that would be of great value to our spiritual well-being. We are plainly taught that "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16,17)."

So we ask again, "How large is your Bible?" Some people feel that all they need is the ten commandments and the sermon on the mount. Others say, "Give me the twenty-third Psalm and the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians and you can have all the rest of it. Others have used only certain proof texts, which they use to bolster some theological argument or doctrinal position.

Do you find yourself shying around certain portions of the Bible? Do you skip the genealogies in your reading? They are in the book which God has given and most certainly lead us to Christ on his human side. Do the messages of the great prophets of God fail to interest you? We are told that we have the word of prophecy made more sure, to which we would do well to take heed as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts (II Peter 1:19). When we think of all the Bible which we omit in

our reading and study, we should say, "Just how large, after all, is my Bible?"

Some years ago an edition of the Bible was brought out called "The Shorter Bible." Much that is in the sixty-six books of the Bible was omitted. There was a great hue and cry of protest raised in many quarters against this edition of the Bible, and rightly so. Yet many of us have an even much shorter Bible which we use. If only what we actually have read, studied and prayed about was put in a single volume, how small it would be!

We should, I think, admit that the parts of the Bible which we omit are those passages which many of us reject outright or explain away to mean nothing much at all. We say they are not essential, therefore we do not seek to know their meaning. There are people in the world who have no arms, no legs, or eyes. It is plain that these things are not essential to life. Some must go on living -- in a way -- without them. But, after all, it is a poor way of living.

So it is when great areas of God's word are overlooked, or merely glazed over or rejected because we do not deem them necessary to our Christian lives. Legs, of course, are not essential to a man's life, but they are essential to his walking and living a full, active life. God would not have made legs if they were unnecessary. Neither would he have given us so large a book if any part of it had no purpose or meaning.

We feel that it is the solemn obligation of the church at all times to foster and pursue a full Bible ministry. Groups of people should be gathered around the whole word of God, searching the scriptures, for Jesus said, "They testify of me."

As you look this morning upon that beautifully Morocco-bound volume lying upon the table in your home, or as you see the large, ornate family Bible in a place of honor in your living room, ask yourself, "Is this my real Bible? Or do I have an abbreviated, shortened, diluted, emasculated volume of my own choosing?"