

**TWELVE HOMILIES: SELECTED  
FROM THOSE APPOINTED TO BE  
READ IN CHURCHES IN THE TIME  
OF QUEEN ELIZABETH OF  
FAMOUS MEMORY**

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Twelve Homilies: Selected from Those Appointed to Be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory by Anonymous

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**ANONYMOUS**

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*Church of England. Homilies.*

# TWELVE HOMILIES

SELECTED

FROM THOSE

Appointed to be read in Churches

IN THE TIME OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

OF FAMOUS MEMORY.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

Most of the reasons which induced the wise and pious counsellors of King Edward the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth to advise those sovereigns to issue the Homilies, apply with equal force to their re-publication at the present time.

The Homilies set forth the doctrine, that *the Word of God is the only food of the soul, and that most excellent light that we must walk by, in this our most dangerous pilgrimage*; from which men must learn *their duty towards God, their prince, and their neighbours*; by which *all corrupt, vicious, and ungodly living, as also erroneous and poisoned doctrines, tending to superstition and idolatry, are to be repelled and driven away*; and through which we may be led into *all godliness and virtue*.

The Homilies faithfully and clearly expound *the principal points of Christian Religion*; and are therefore well adapted to warn men against the *manifest enormities which by false doctrines have crept into the Church of God*, and to move men to *honour and worship Almighty God, and diligently to serve Him, every one according to their degree, state, and vocation*.\*

The Sermons in this volume are reprinted, without abridgement (excepting in the case of Homily XXVIII., of which part 2 is omitted), from the complete edition recently published by the Prayer-book and Homily Society.

\* See the Preface of 1562.

August, 1852.

Gift of Widener

A FRUITFUL EXHORTATION TO THE  
READING AND KNOWLEDGE OF  
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

UNTO a Christian man there can be no- The praise of Holy Scripture.  
 thing either more necessary or profitable than the knowledge of Holy Scripture: forasmuch as in it is contained God's true word, setting forth his glory, and also man's duty. And there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification, and everlasting The perfection of Holy Scripture.  
 salvation, but that is (or may be) drawn out of that fountain and well of truth. There- The knowledge of Holy Scripture is necessary.  
 fore as many as be desirous to enter into the right and perfect way unto God, must apply their minds to know Holy Scripture; without the which they can neither sufficiently know God and his will, neither their office and duty. And as drink To whom the knowledge of Holy Scripture is sweet and pleasant.  
 is pleasant to them that be dry, and meat to them that be hungry; so is the reading, hearing, searching, and studying of Holy Who be enemies to Holy Scripture.  
 Scripture, to them that be desirous to know God, or themselves, and to do his will. And their An apt similitude, declaring of whom the Scripture is abhorred.  
 stomachs only do loathe and abhor the heavenly knowledge and food of God's word, that be so drowned in worldly vanities, that they neither savour God, nor any godliness: for that is the cause why they desire such vanities, rather than the true knowledge of God. As they that are sick of an ague, An apt similitude, declaring of whom the Scripture is abhorred.  
 whatsoever they eat and drink, though it be never so pleasant, yet it is as bitter to them as wormwood; not for the bitterness of the meat, but for the corrupt and bitter humour that is in their own tongue and mouth: even so is the sweetness of God's word bitter, not of itself, but only unto them that have their minds corrupted with long custom of sin, and love of this world. Therefore forsaking the corrupt judgment of fleshly men, which care not but for their carcase, let us reverently hear and read Holy Scriptures, which is the food of the soul (Matt. iv. 4). Let us diligently An exhortation unto the diligent reading and searching of the Holy Scripture.

### *An Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture.*

search for the well of life [John iv. 14.] in the books of the Old and New Testament, and not run to the stinking puddles of men's traditions (devised by man's imagination) for our justification and salvation.

The Holy Scripture is a sufficient doctrine for our salvation.

For, in Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length. In these books we shall find the Father from whom, the Son by whom, and the Holy

What things we may learn in the Holy Scripture.

Ghost in whom, all things have their being and keeping up; and these three Persons to be but one God, and one substance. In these books we may learn to know ourselves, how vile and miserable we be, and also to know God, how good he is of himself, and how he maketh us and all creatures partakers of his goodness. We may learn also in these books to know God's will and pleasure, as much as, for this present time, is convenient for us to know.

And, as the great clerk and godly preacher, St. John Chrysostom, saith, "Whatsoever is required to salvation of man, is fully contained in the Scripture of God. He that is ignorant may there learn and have knowledge. He that is hard-

hearted, and an obstinate sinner, shall there find everlasting torments, prepared of God's justice, to make him afraid, and to mollify or soften him. He that is oppressed with misery in this world shall there find relief in the promises of everlasting life, to his great consolation and comfort. He that is wounded by the Devil unto death shall find there medicine, whereby he may be restored again unto health. If it shall be requisite to teach any truth, or reprove false doctrine, to rebuke any vice, to commend any virtue, to give good counsel, to comfort, to exhort, or to do any other thing requisite for our salvation; all those things," saith St. Chrysostom, "we may learn plentifully of the Scripture."

"There is," saith Fulgentius, "abundantly enough, both for men to eat, and children to suck. There is whatsoever is meet for all ages, and for all degrees and sorts of men."

Holy Scripture ministereth sufficient doctrine for all degrees and ages.

These books therefore ought to be much in our hands, in our eyes, in our ears, in our mouths, but most of all in our hearts. For the Scripture

What commodities and profits the knowledge

of God is the heavenly meat of our souls (Matt. iv. 4.); the hearing and keeping of it



*An Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture.*

maketh us blessed (Luke xi. 28), sanctifieth <sup>of Holy Scrip-</sup> us (John xvii. 17), and maketh us holy; it <sup>sure</sup> bringeth turneth our souls; it is a light lantern to our feet [Ps. cxix. 105]; it is a sure, stedfast, and everlasting instrument of salvation; it giveth wisdom to the humble and lowly hearts; it comforteth, maketh glad, cheereth, and cherisheth our conscience; it is a more excellent jewel or treasure than any gold or precious stone; it is more sweet than honey or honey-comb (Ps. xix. 7—11); it is called *the best part*, which Mary did choose, for it hath in it everlasting comfort (Luke x. 42). The words of Holy Scripture be called words of *everlasting life*; for they be God's instrument, ordained for the same purpose (John vi. 47, 68, 68). They have power to turn through God's promise, and they be effectual through God's assistance, and (being received in a faithful heart) they have ever an heavenly spiritual working in them: they are lively, quick, and mighty in operation, and *sharper than any two-edged sword, and enter through, even unto the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, of the joints and the marrow* (Heb. iv. 12). Christ calleth him a *wise builder*, that buildeth upon his word, upon his sure and substantial foundation (Matt. vii. 24). By this word of God we shall be judged: *for the word that I speak, saith Christ, is it that shall judge in the last day* (John xii. 48). He that keepeth the word of Christ, is promised the love and favour of God, and that he shall be the dwelling-place or temple of the blessed Trinity (John xiv. 23). This word whosoever is diligent to read, and in his heart to print that he readeth, the great affection to the transitory things of this world shall be minished in him, and the great desire of heavenly things (that be therein promised of God) shall increase in him. And there is nothing that so much strenghteneth our faith and trust in God, that so much keepeth up innocency and pureness of the heart, and also of outward godly life and conversation, as continual reading and recording of God's word. For that thing, which (by continual use of reading of Holy Scripture, and diligent searching of the same) is deeply printed and graven in the heart, at length turneth almost into nature. And moreover, the effect and virtue of God's word is to illuminate the ignorant, and to give more light unto them that faithfully and diligently read

*An Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture.*

it, to comfort their hearts, and to encourage them to perform that which of God is commanded. It teacheth patience in all adversity, in prosperity humbleness; what honour is due unto God, what mercy and charity to our neighbour. It giveth good counsel in all doubtful things. It sheweth of whom we shall look for aid and help in all perils, and that God is the only giver of victory in all battles and temptations of our enemies, bodily and ghostly (1 Sam. xiv. 6, 12; 2 Chron. xx. 6, 15; 1 Cor. xv. 57; 1 John v. 4).

Who profits most in reading God's Word. And in the reading of God's word, he most profiteth not always that is

most ready in turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book; but he that is most turned into it, that is most inspired with the Holy Ghost, most in his heart and life altered and changed into that thing which he readeth; he that is daily less and less proud, less wrathful, less covetous, and less desirous of worldly and vain pleasures; he that daily (forsaking his old vicious life) increaseth in virtue more and more. And to be short, there is nothing that more maintaineth godliness of the mind, and driveth away ungodliness, than doth the continual reading or hearing of God's word, if it be joined with a godly mind, and a good affection to know and follow

What incommodities the ignorance of God's word bringeth. God's will. For without a single eye, pure intent, and good mind, nothing is allowed for good before God. And on the other side, nothing more darkeneth Christ and the glory of God, nor bringeth in more blindness and all kinds of vices, than doth the ignorance of God's word (Is. v. 24; Matt. xxii. 29; 1 Cor. xiv. 37).

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THE SECOND PART OF THE SERMON OF THE KNOWLEDGE  
OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

In the first part of this sermon, which exhorteth to the knowledge of Holy Scripture, was declared wherefore the knowledge of the same is necessary and profitable to all men; and that by the true knowledge and understanding of Scripture, the most necessary points of our duty towards God and our neighbours are also known. Now as concerning the same matter you shall hear what followeth.

If we profess Christ, why be we not ashamed to be ignorant in his doctrine? Seeing that every man is

*An Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture.*

ashamed to be ignorant in that learning which he professeth. That man is ashamed to be called a philosopher which readeth not the books of philosophy, and to be called a lawyer, an astronomer, or a physician, that is ignorant in the books of law, astronomy, and physic. How can any man then say that he professeth Christ and his religion, if he will not apply himself (as far forth as he can or may conveniently) to read and hear, and so to know the books of Christ's gospel and doctrine? Although other sciences be good, and to be learned, yet no man can deny but this is the chief, and passeth all other incomparably. God's word excelleth all sciences.

What excuse shall we therefore make, at the last day before Christ, that delight to read or hear men's fancies and inventions, more than his most holy gospel? and will find no time to do that, which chiefly, above all things, we should do; and will rather read other things than that, for the which we ought rather to leave reading of all other things? Let us therefore apply ourselves, as far forth as we can have time and leisure, to know God's word, by diligent hearing and reading thereof, as many as profess God, and have faith and trust in him. But they that have no good affection to God's word (to colour this their fault) Vain excuses dissuading from the knowledge of God's word. allege commonly two vain and feigned excuses. Some go about to excuse them by their own frailness and fearfulness, feigning that they dare not read Holy Scripture, lest through their ignorance they should fall into any error. Other pretend that the difficulty to understand it, and the hardness thereof is so great, The first. that it is meet to be read only of clerks and learned men. The second.

As touching the first: ignorance of God's word is the cause of all error, as Christ himself affirmed to the Sadducees, saying, that *they erred because they knew not the Scripture* (Matt. xxii. 29). How should they then eschew error, that will be still ignorant? And how should they come out of ignorance, that will not read nor hear that thing which should give them knowledge? He that now hath most knowledge, was at the first ignorant; yet he forbore not to read, for fear he should fall into error: but he diligently read, lest he should remain in ignorance, and through ignorance in error. And if you will not know the truth of God (a thing most necessary for you) lest