

**IS THE BIBLE WORTH  
READING: AND  
OTHER ESSAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649616626

Is the Bible Worth Reading: And Other Essays by Lemuel K. Washburn

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**LEMUEL K. WASHBURN**

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*Lemuel K. Washburn*

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GIFT OF IRVING LEVY

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LEMUEL K. WASHBURN

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NEW YORK:  
THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY  
62 Vesey St.  
N. Y. C.



## IS THE BIBLE WORTH READING

That depends. If a man is going to get his living by standing in a Christian pulpit, I should be obliged to answer, Yes! But if he is going to follow any other calling, or work at any trade, I should have to answer, No! There is absolutely no information in the Bible that man can make any use of as he goes through life. The Bible is not a book of knowledge. It does not give instruction in any of the sciences. It furnishes no help to labor. It is useless as a political guide. There is nothing in it that gives the mechanic any hint, or affords the farmer any enlightenment in his occupation.

If man wishes to learn about the earth or the heavens; about life or the animal kingdom, he has no need to study the Bible. If he is desirous of reading the best poetry or the most entertaining literature he will not find it in the Bible. If he wants to read to store his mind with facts, the Bible is the last book for him to open, for never yet was a volume written that contained fewer facts than this book. If he is anxious to get some information that will help him earn an honest living he does not want to spend his time reading Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Kings, Psalms, or the Gospels. If he wants to read just for the fun of read-



ing, to kill time, or to see how much nonsensical writing there is in one book, let him read the Bible.

I have not said that there are not wise sayings in the Bible, or a few dramatic incidents, but there are just as wise sayings, and wiser ones, too, out of the book, and there are dramas of human life that surpass in interest anything contained in the Old or New Testament.

No person can make a decent excuse for reading the Bible more than once. To do such a thing would be a foolish waste of time. But our stoutest objection to reading this book is, not that it contains nothing particularly good, but *that it contains so much that is positively bad*. To read this book is to get false ideas, absurd ideas, bad ideas. The injury to the human mind that reads the Bible as a reliable book is beyond repair. I do not think that this book should be read by children, by any human being less than twenty years of age, and it would be better for mankind if not a man or woman read a line of it until he or she was fifty years old.

What I want to say is this, that there is nothing in the Bible that is of the least consequence to the people of the twentieth century. English literature is richer a thousand fold than this so-called sacred volume. We have books of more information and of more inspiration than the Bible. As the relic of a barbarous and superstitious people, it should have a place in our libraries, but it is not a work of any value to this age. I pity men who

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IS THE BIBLE WORTH READING

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stand in pulpits and call this book the word of God. I wish they had brains enough to earn their living without having to repeat this foolish falsehood. The day will come when this book will be estimated for what it is worth, and when that day comes, the Bible will no longer be called the word of God, but the work of ignorant, superstitious men.

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The cross everywhere is a dagger in the heart of liberty.

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A miracle is not an explanation of what we cannot comprehend.

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The statue of liberty that will endure on this continent is not the one made of granite or bronze, but the one made of love of freedom.

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Take away every achievement of the world and leave man freedom, and the earth would again bloom with every glory of attainment; but take away liberty and everything useful and beautiful would vanish.

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## SACRIFICE

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### SACRIFICE

The sacrifice of Jesus, so much boasted by the Christian church, is nothing compared to the sacrifice of a mother for her family. It is not to be spoken of in the same light. A mother's sacrifice is constant: momentary, hourly, daily, life-long. It never ceases. It is a veritable providence; a watchful care; a real giving of one life for another, or for several others; a gift of love so pure and holy, so single and complete, that it is an offering in spirit and in substance.

This is to me the highest, purest, holiest act of humanity. All others, when weighed with this unselfish consecration to duty, seem small and insignificant. There is, in a mother's life, no counting of cost, no calculation of reward. It is enough that a duty is to be done; that a service is to be rendered; that a sacrifice is called for. The true mother gives herself to the offices of love without hope, expectation, or wish of recompense. A mother's love for her children cannot be determined by any earthly measure, by any material standard. It outshines all glory, and is the last gleam of light in the human heart. A mother's love walks in a thousand Gethsemanes, endures a thousand Calvaries, and has a thousand agonies that the dying of Jesus upon a cross cannot symbolize. This maternal sacrifice is the greater that it is made cheerfully, without a murmur, and even with joy. If it is not sought; it is never pushed aside.