



“ But what are you hanging your head down for, Amelia ?”

— p. 24.

AMELIA FINLEY;

OR, THE

CARELESS READING OF THE BIBLE REPROVED.

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Amelia. MOTHER, what good will it do me to read in the Bible?

Mrs. Finley. It will teach you what God requires you to do, how to be a good child. And

besides, it will show you what God is, and how you may get to heaven.

A. Did God write the Bible?

Mrs. F. God did not write the Bible with his own hands, but he inspired good men to write it.

A. What do you mean by *inspired*?

Mrs. F. I mean God put into their minds the things they were

to write. He taught them exactly what to say.

A. Then I suppose they could not go wrong.

Mrs. F. Certainly not. The Lord kept them from going wrong, and showed them every thing that it was right for them to say. This is what I mean when I say that they were *inspired*.

A. Could not they know what

to say without being taught by God?

Mrs. F. There are a few things in the Bible which the men who wrote it might know, without being inspired. But they could not know whether it was proper to write these things or not, unless the Lord had directed them. And then there are a great many things which they could not know at all, unless God taught them. No man could know any thing about the creation of the world,

unless he learned it from God. When the sun was made, there was no man to see it. God instructed Moses how to write about the creation of the sun.

A. If God did not write the Bible, why do you call the words in it God's words ?

Mrs. F. Because God taught these words to the men who wrote the books. The words, first of all, came from God. Do you remember that I sent word

to Mrs. Brown to come here to-morrow ?

A. Yes, mother.

Mrs. F. I did not write the note myself, did I ?

A. You did not, but you told Julia every word you wanted her to write in the note.

Mrs. F. Then the words were just as much mine as if I had taken the pen and writ-

ten them myself. Were they not?

A. Yes, they were, for Mrs. Brown said, "Mrs. Finley has sent me word that she wishes to see me."

Mrs. F. Now do you know what I mean to teach you by this?

A. I think I do. You mean that the Bible is just as much the teaching of God as if God had written it with pen and ink.

Mrs. F. Exactly so. And whenever you read in the Bible, you ought to remember that you are reading God's words. It is just as if God was speaking to you from heaven.

A. I never thought of that before, for I often laugh and play when I am reading my lesson in the Bible.

Mrs. F. Would you laugh and play if you heard the voice of God speaking to you in this room?

A. Oh, no! I should be very much afraid.

Mrs. F. Would you laugh and play if you were reading a letter which you knew came from heaven?

A. Oh, no, mother!

Mrs. F. Then you ought not to do so when you are reading in the Scriptures. It is just like reading a letter from heaven. It

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is the same thing as hearing the voice of the Lord speaking to you.

A. I will try to be more sober when I am reading God's book.

Mrs. F. If the Lord should send you word that he would speak to you this night, in your little room, just as he did to little Samuel, would it not make you very sober ?

A. I think it would.

Mrs. F. Would you not be very attentive to hear every thing that the Lord said ?

A. Yes, I should indeed, if I were not too much afraid.

Mrs. F. And afterwards would you not try to remember every word ?

A. I think I would. Now I see what you mean. The Lord has given us in the Bible what he means us to know, and when-

ever I read in the Bible I ought to be just as serious as if the Lord was talking to me, as he did to little Samuel. Is not this what you wished to teach me, mother?

Mrs. F. Yes, my dear. But what else do you think I meant?

A. Let me see. You said something about being attentive. O yes, now I remember. You meant that I ought to be just as attentive to what I read in the

Bible as I would be to the words of the Lord, if he was speaking to me with his own voice. And then, besides, I ought to be very careful to recollect every single thing which I read in the Bible.

Mrs. F. Exactly. Now let me tell you what I saw the other day. I was walking in the garden, looking at the roses, and tulips, and hyacinths, and I came to an arbour where a little girl was sitting upon a bench. She

seemed to have a book lying before her on the bench, and when I came near I saw that it was the Bible. She had a new doll in her hands, and I could not tell which she was doing most, reading or playing. She would read for a few moments, and then she would begin to play with her doll. Then she would begin again to read. Then she would take up her doll. And sometimes, while her eyes were on the book, she would be singing a little song, or jumping her doll up and down. Do you



think this little girl was as serious as she should have been in reading the Bible ?

A. Oh, my dear mother, I am afraid you mean me, for I believe I was doing just so the other day when you came to me in the garden.

Mrs. F. One day I was reading in the New Testament with a young person, about the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a very solemn

chapter, enough to make one weep. This young person would read a verse, and then begin to talk about something else. I do not think she attended to what she was reading, for every few minutes she would say, *O, see what an elegant butterfly!* or, *I wonder when the soldiers will go by?*

A. O, mother! now I am sure you mean me; and I am very sorry that I should have been so wicked and foolish,

Mrs. F. At another time I called a little sprightly miss, and said to her, "My dear, what did you read about this morning in the New Testament?" She could not tell me. I asked her whether it was about David, or Moses, or Paul. She could not tell me. I asked her to tell me one single thing she had read about. She could not remember a single word. Now this showed that she had paid no attention to what she had read. Such reading is of no use. Unless we remember

what we have been reading about it does us no good. But what are you holding your head down for, Amelia ?

A. My dear mother, please to say no more about this ! I knew you meant me all the time ; and now I am sure that I did very wrong. I did not think so much about it before.

Mrs. F. I am glad that you see your fault, and now I will speak about something else. Not



long ago I went to see our neighbour, Mr. Frazer. When I got to his house the whole family were together in the parlour. Mrs. Frazer and the boys and girls were all sitting round the room, and each one had a Bible. They gave me a Bible too, and I sat down with them. Every one read a verse when it came to his turn, and when there was any thing hard, Mr. Frazer told them what it meant. After they were done reading, he told me that they read through the whole Bible

once every year, in this way. It was a very pleasing sight.

A. How could they read the whole Bible through in a year? This would take a great deal every day.

Mrs. F. Not so much as you think. Mr. Frazer said they read five chapters every Lord's-day, and three chapters every week-day; and in this way they could get through the whole in a year.

A. I think I will begin to-morrow, and read through the whole Bible.

Mrs. F. You can easily do so, if you will get up early, and act as my little sister Fanny used to do.

A. How was that, mother?

Mrs. F. Little Fanny is now gone to heaven. When she was eight years old, she used to kneel down and pray as soon as she

was dressed in the morning. Then she would take her little Bible, and go into a quiet room up-stairs, and read for more than half an hour. She also committed to memory two verses every morning, and repeated them to her father at the breakfast-table.

A. Was she a good girl?

Mrs. F. She had some faults, but she loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and was a pious child.

A. When did she die ?

Mrs. F. When she was about ten years old she was seized with the scarlet fever. Her dear mother asked her if she was willing to die; and she said she was glad to go where Christ was. Then she asked for her little Bible to be brought, and I read to her about the blessed Saviour's death. She threw her arms around my neck and said, "Dear sister, I give you this book; it has shown me the way to heaven."

A. O, I wish I was a good girl! Will the Bible show me the way to heaven?

Mrs. F. Yes, my daughter, if you attend to what it says. If you loved the Bible as you ought, you would read it a great deal more. You would like it better than your little story-books; and you would try to do all that it commands.

A. But, mother, there are a

great many hard things, that I do not understand.

Mrs. F. Some of these you will know better, when you grow older. You must wait, and you will understand them in time. When there is any thing which you do not know, you ought to come to your father or to me, and ask what it means. And you ought to ask the Lord, every day, to teach you what you do not know.

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A. If there was no Bible, should we know how to please God?

Mrs. F. No, my child. If we had not the Holy Scriptures, we should be heathens. We should be worshipping idols of wood and stone; perhaps I should have drowned you in the river, as the women in the East Indies drown their little children. Thank God, then, for this precious book.

THE END.