

The World's Most Sought After Book

"Great peace have they who love your law"

Psalms 119:165 (NIV)

No book in the history of humanity has been printed as often or sold as many copies as the Christian Bible in the English language. In our verse the writer calls the Bible God's law. The most enduring translation into English is the good old King James Bible of 1611 C.E., or the Authorised Version as it is often called (although it was never officially authorized). It holds the record for being the most popular translation ever published, holding the field for over 250 years.

The King after whom this translation is named viewed himself as destined by God to be the publisher and defender of the Holy Scriptures. He is the only king ever to ascend the English throne as a published author.

It is indeed a remarkable thing that the Holy Bible has been sought after by so many countless millions of people around the world. It has had many critics, some who are nothing more than educated fools, being educated beyond their intelligence. Yet, it survived and still outsells any other book ever published.

No person, no matter how brilliant or wise, has ever been able to write a book as loved and consulted as the Christian Bible. Does that not tell us something? The great philosopher Francois Marie Arouet (Voltaire was his pen name) criticized the church during his lifetime. After his death the Geneva Bible Society bought his house in Geneva and used it

to publish and distribute Bibles. Now don't tell me God does not have a sense of humour.

God gave us the Bible as a user's guide to life. Its wisdom has never been successfully refuted. Many of the poorest and most poorly educated of people, along with brilliant people throughout history have consulted its pages and come away blessed and encouraged in life. Various leading intellectuals such as Voltaire have spoken out against the Bible. Their voices have been silenced by death, but the Word of God still addresses the issues of society in a most convincing manner.

One brilliant 20th century thinker came to the conclusion, as he surveyed the reality of death and eternity, that "only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built". What a sad and unnecessary way to look at life.

The Bible is full of hope and encouragement for the person who is weary of life. If we take its teaching seriously and accept it for ourselves we may endure the difficulties of this life with the great expectation that in the future all wrongs will be made right and justice will prevail.

Our verse today is a truly remarkable promise about how to have peace of mind in the context of turmoil in our lives. Getting acquainted with the Bible and what it says about life and how to live is the most rewarding thing anyone

can do. It is interesting that the brilliant sayings of philosophers do not tend to be quoted very often at funerals or when someone is desperately ill. On the other hand countless times the 23rd Psalm has been read in the context of great suffering, even by people who usually do not consult the Bible for answers to life's tragedies. The Christian hymn Amazing Grace has been sung or played by bagpipes at many funerals of people, many of whom, do not even go to church.

We need to wake up and smell the flowers. The Psalmist is right. There is a wonderful resource for us in the Bible, God's Law, and we need its comfort and encouragement every day. Life can certainly be dark and foreboding if we face it without the light of Scripture.

Let me suggest that you begin with the Psalms if you are struggling with issues. If you wish to learn about how God has entered His own creation and acted to address the evil and suffering in the world, read the Gospel of John.

Whatever you do, read the Bible today and God will speak to you and you will learn about the peace that sustains the weary.

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