

“The Word of the Lord Was Precious”

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When Samuel was a little boy the Bible says, “The word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no open vision” (1 Samuel 3:1). Gold is a “precious” metal because in relation to other metals there is a scarcity of it. The word of the Lord was precious in Samuel’s early life because there was a scarcity of the open vision. Why this may have been so received comment from the well-known Bible scholar C.F. Keil, “God might even withdraw His word to punish the idolatrous nation. Such a time as this, when revelations from God were universally rare, and had now arisen under Eli, in whose days, as the conduct of his sons sufficiently proves, the priesthood had fallen into very deep corruption” (Old Testament Commentary, volume 2, p. 394).

When corruption was typical of the “Dark Ages” the reading of the Bible was suppressed. Henry H. Halley related the details,

The Papacy and the Bible. Hildebrand ordered Bohemians not to read the Bible. Innocent III forbade the people reading the Bible in their own language. Gregory IX forbade laymen possessing the Bible, and suppressed translations. Translations among the Albigenses and Waldenses were burned, and people burned for having them. Paul IV prohibited the possession of translations without permission of the Inquisition. The Jesuits induced Clement XI to condemn the reading of the Bible by the laity. Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI and Pius IX all condemned Bible Societies. In Catholic countries the Bible is an unknown book (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, p. 783).

In our own day when corruption abounds societally, politically, and religiously, serious thought should be given to the difference between the suppression of the Scripture and the ignoring of it. The strength of an apostle’s command on the subject is “till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:13).