

# Read Through the Bible Each Year

The Rev'd. Dr. John Roddam | [www.pleromainternational.ca](http://www.pleromainternational.ca)

Diocesan Times Article – October 2016



Charles Haddon Spurgeon, beloved 19<sup>th</sup> C. “Prince of Preachers,” was the Billy Graham of his day. He had a large church in London that came to be known as The Metropolitan Tabernacle. This great church served a broad spectrum of the city.

On one occasion, Spurgeon was called to visit an elderly member of his congregation. She was known as a godly woman of prayer. When the pastor visited this dear lady, he found her at the point of death, suffering from malnutrition and disease. It took Spurgeon a few moments to adjust to the light of the oil lamp in the one room, earthen-floored home.

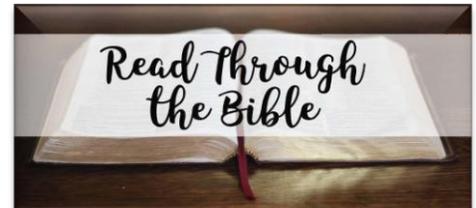
At once, his eye caught a framed picture. He took the lamp closer to get a better view and gasped... Turning to the stricken, emaciated figure, he asked, “Do you know what this is?” The gentle woman responded, “This was a retirement gift from the family I served for over 40 years.” Spurgeon replied, “Do you know what it says?” The weakened saint hesitated and in an embarrassed tone said, “I have no idea what it says... I cannot read! It was so beautiful, I had it framed and it has hung in that place for many years.”

Spurgeon’s eyes widened in shock. He gently explained that the “picture” was, in fact a beautifully woven cheque for thousands of pounds sterling. A grateful family had given this faithful nanny enough money whereby she could purchase her own home and have servants to serve her in her old age.

Instead, she was languishing in poverty and sickness, ignorant of the blessing that was only a few feet away! Spurgeon told this story many times over during the years of his world-wide ministry. He used it as an illustration of how believers are ignorant of the promises and blessings written in God’s Word, the Holy Bible. As a result, Christians are weak, malnourished, and dying!

The Church of England not only led the larger Body of Christ by founding missionary societies but the Bible Society, promoting the distribution and study of scripture was also founded by Anglican leaders. Sadly, in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century era, the Anglican Church in Canada ranks close to the bottom of Christian Denominations in Biblical literacy.

The Two Books of Homilies from the reign of Elizabeth I are a synopsis of Reformed Catholic Theology and practice, read widely through the 16<sup>th</sup> C. Church. The first chapter is entitled, “A Fruitful Exhortation To The Reading And Knowledge Of Holy Scripture.” The Bible is the bedrock of the Faith once delivered to the Saints. Our tradition stands in the forefront historically in the advancement of personal Bible study.



## The Roddam Challenge

In my parishes, I offered a gentle “dare” called the Roddam Challenge. I would encourage parishioners to read through the Bible each year. Certificates were given to those who had completed the task at the parish annual meeting with great celebration.

Personal Bible Study Plans are available online (See the daily devotionals available through [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com)) or through the Canadian Bible Society or a Christian Bookstore. One may even obtain a Bible set out in 365 daily readings!

One dear life-long Anglican and head of the Altar Guild opined, “I have never read the Bible in its entirety before. It took 20 minutes a day to read through the Bible in a year. That’s the least I can do for my Lord!” How about you?