

## A Bible without numbers

By [Chris Brundage](#)

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Since I am curious about new versions of the Bible, I picked up a copy of *The Books of the Bible*, an edition without section headings or chapter and verse divisions. Simply the plain text, in the NIV translation, in a single column format. They changed the order in the Old Testament (or First Testament) to conform to the threefold division in the Hebrew Bible of Law, Prophets and Writings. They also changed the arrangement in the New Testament, beginning with Luke-Acts as one work in two volumes. I have long wanted an edition of the Bible uncluttered with chapter and verse numbers. It is a pleasure to read, and you realize how short a typical passage from the Bible is.

I read the Gospel of Luke first and reflected on the provocative life of Jesus. I noted his awareness of the realm of Spirit and his frequent admonition on the dangers of wealth. Then I read two of the wisdom books. Proverbs sums up our conduct in life in a few rules: work diligently, be generous, play fairly, keep your mouth shut, etc. Ecclesiastes offers a lot of wry and world-weary observations of life, with an emphasis on enjoying its simple pleasures. "Light is sweet, and it pleases the eyes to see the sun." Now I am in Corinthians. Encountering the Bible in this way, I am reading more in one sitting. In a Bible without numbers, you naturally keep reading till the end of the book.

The Bible is a collection of voices, and listening to them regularly helps attune me to the Speaking Voice deep within.

The one corner-stone of belief upon which the Society of Friends is built is the conviction that God does indeed communicate with each one of the spirits He has made, in a direct and living inbreathing of some measure of the breath of His own life; that He never leaves Himself without a witness in the heart as well as in the surroundings of man; and that in order clearly to hear the Divine voice thus speaking to us we need to be still; to be alone with Him in the secret place of His presence; that all flesh should

keep silence before Him. (Caroline Stephen)

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