

Anxious Allusions: The Bible in Thomas Carlyle's Correspondence

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All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

On the whole it is the thorough *heartiness*, the intense and entire *sincerity* of the Bible that makes it still the Book of Books. In no other Book is there the same quality in such a degree. (Carlyle *Collected Letters* 7:23-24)

On April 2, 1826, Thomas Carlyle wrote to Jane Baillie Welsh about living arrangements for her mother: "I had taken no distinct account of your Mother. I merely remembered the text of Scripture: 'Thou shalt leave thy father and mother, and cleave unto thy husband, and thy desire shall be towards him all the days of thy life'" (CL 4:68-69). One can only wonder if Jane took out her Bible and checked Carlyle's quotation of Ephesians 5:31. If she had, she would have been surprised to find the following directive to *husbands*: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." To find the re-

mainder of Carlyle's quotation, Jane would have had to turn to Genesis 3:16, where she would have found God's curse upon Eve: "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Carlyle's misquotation was probably a simple bit of wishful remembering, but his use of scripture here provides a tantalizing glimpse into his relationship with the Bible and with his future wife, and it is only one of his many remarkable applications of Scripture which reward study.

Beyond such unusual instances, and even more important, is the overall pattern of Carlyle's biblical allusions (he drew on the King James Version, of course), which is now traceable, using computer technology and the excellent annotation of the Duke-Edinburgh edition of Carlyle's letters.¹ Analysis reveals that Carlyle focuses on particular themes and favorite verses, employs Scripture for a variety of purposes which shifted over time and varied from correspondent to correspondent, and favors certain genres of biblical literature and certain books. Further, he uses the Bible more frequently with some correspondents than with others and considerably more often in some years than in others. The overall pattern of Carlyle's use of the Bible in his correspondence suggests that, though other factors do play a role, he generally alludes to the Bible when he was anxious about an issue, a relationship, or both.

I. CARLYLE'S FAVORITE BIBLICAL THEMES

Carlyle's biblical allusions treat at least thirty-two different themes, eight of which each account for over five percent of the total and reflect issues that concerned him greatly and that often generated considerable anxiety in his life (see Figure 1).²

¹This essay analyzes all allusions identified in the footnotes of the Duke-Edinburgh edition through 1855.

²Several other themes—death (4.46 percent), God's sovereignty and power (3.66 percent), wisdom vs. foolishness (3.66 percent), Jesus (3.34 percent), Christian commitment (3.34 percent), courage (2.39 percent), evangelism (2.39 percent), joy (2.23 percent), and poverty vs. wealth (2.07 percent)—account for less than five percent but more than two percent of the verses to which Carlyle alludes. The ways in which he uses these verses further

support the idea that he alludes to the Bible to alleviate anxiety, either his own or someone else's.

The idea of eternal perspective relates Carlyle's favorite verses on death, God's sovereignty, and wisdom vs. foolishness to each other. A number of deaths occurred in Carlyle's immediate and extended family and among his friends and acquaintances, and to comfort himself and the bereaved on these occasions, he invokes 2 Samuel 12:23 seven times and Ecclesiastes 12:5 three times (*CL* 3:68; 5:219; 8:215 and 299; 14:64 and 101; 16:62 and 156; and 26:30). Like Hebrews 13:14, one of Carlyle's favorite verses on the temporal vs. the eternal, both of these verses suggest a place beyond death as the home of all believers. With these verses, Carlyle provides an eternal perspective which alleviates one major facet of grief, the anxiety of the bereaved over permanent separation from the dead; if there is hope for an ultimate reunion, there is no reason to worry over this particular aspect of the loss. Carlyle's favorite verse on God's sovereignty is not nearly so uplifting; he uses Ecclesiastes 9:11 in a variety of circumstances to remind correspondents in trying circumstances that time and chance affect everyone (*CL* 6:306, 320, and 337; 8:131 and 179). Once again, his strategy for addressing anxiety over loss or setback is a call to step back to a broader perspective. Last, he had little patience for fools, whom he defines largely as those who did not maintain an eternal/critical perspective on events or issues. To express his exasperation he alludes three times to Proverbs 27:22 on the persistence of folly or to Ecclesiastes 1:2 on the vanity of earthly concerns (*CL* 1:104; 6:198; and 7:258). His frustration with others who did not maintain perspective reflects the importance he placed on wisdom, and his use of the Bible to discuss this topic again demonstrates his tendency to reach for it when he felt challenged.

Carlyle's references to Jesus comprise only 3.34 percent of his biblical allusions, and he refers to no verses four or more times. Three times he invokes Mark 7:37 on Jesus' doing all things well, but his application of the verse implies that he does not have God the Son in particular in mind (*CL* 6:112 and 120; and 17:78). His three allusions to John 19:17 invoke Golgotha, but his emphasis in all of them is on the ugliness of the place, not on Jesus' suffering at the crucifixion which took place there (*CL* 10:116; 16:287; and 21:29). Far from singling out the crucifixion as a unique event, he pairs it with Exodus 10:21 about the plague of darkness in Egypt, when he uses that verse to describe Jane's depression. The absence of Jesus himself from Carlyle's application of verses which center on Him suggests some conflict within Carlyle over the person of Jesus and His significance.

Carlyle also alludes to verses on commitment, courage, and evangelism in ways which have little to do with the original meaning of the verses. Nine

times he uses Romans 12:11 on maintaining zeal for God, but only twice do his allusions have anything to do with religious enthusiasm (CL 9:336 and 28:315). He applies Daniel 3 about Nebuchadnezzar's furnace not to discuss courage in the face of threats, but, rather, to describe the heat and congestion of London (CL 7:300; 13:146; and 20:202). He invokes Hebrews 12:1, which calls for throwing off all that hinders Christian life, but four out of five times his purpose is to encourage his brother Alick or another young man to pursue his career assiduously (CL 1:387; 6:60; 6:135; and 23:57). He employs Psalms 22:12 about being encircled by dangerous bulls, but on two of three occasions his purpose is to construct his authorship struggle as a test of religious courage (CL 1:365 and 26:224). None of his four uses of Matthew 9:37 on the need for more disciples to spread the gospel refers to disseminating God's word per se; rather, he uses the verse exclusively to construct authorship as evangelism (CL 1:261; 5:219; 12:72; and 22:184). Carlyle's treatment of these verses from Hebrews, Psalms, and Matthew suggests again that he used the Bible to alleviate anxiety—in these cases anxiety about the worldly success of Alick, other young men, and himself. Only when alluding to Isaiah 50:7 about standing steadfastly against hostile people does he regularly preserve the theme of the verse in his application, using it once to encourage his brother to live righteously, once to describe resisting the world's idolatries, and once to describe his relation to the people of London (CL 6:68; 7:258; and 8:122).

Finally, Carlyle alludes to Zechariah 4:10 on taking joy in small things and Psalms 37:16 on the superiority of the righteous man's little over the wicked man's wealth to deal with authorship issues large and small. Five of his seven uses of Zechariah 4:10 are to urge himself or his brother to appreciate various small triumphs in the authorship game: his brother's and his own commissioned translations, two early positive responses to *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), the likely passage of the copyright bill, the reprinting of his biographical essays in cheap form, and the prospect of a French translation of *The French Revolution* (1837) (2:348 and 412; 7:272; 14:139; and 28:153). The concern to maintain gratitude and humility that Carlyle exhibits by repeatedly using this verse in this way suggests an anxiety that ingratitude or pride might somehow sabotage greater successes. His use of Psalms 37:16 demonstrates a similar concern to show gratitude at little instead of resentment that the little is not more. He invokes this verse four times to describe his financial situation—twice in the 1820s in letters to his mother and twice in the 1850s in letters to his wife (CL 1:356; 4:165; and 25:211 and 224). The verse also serves to justify his small income by constructing it as a sacrifice willingly made in the righteous cause of authorship.

Good Deeds/Righteousness vs. Temptation/Sin	10.03%
Work/Diligence/Discipline/Perseverance vs. Laziness/Rest	9.39% (8.44%)
J u d g m e n t / P u n i s h m e n t / C u r s e	7.48%
Temporal vs. Eternal; Physical vs. Spiritual; Worldliness vs. Holiness	7.48%
God's Providence/Mercy/Care/Love	6.69%
M e n / W o m e n / M a r r i a g e / R e l a t i o n s h i p s / F a m i l y	6.21%

Figure 1: Carlyle's Favorite Biblical Themes

The theme that appears most often in Carlyle's biblical allusions is proper conduct—doing good deeds and avoiding sin. He invokes forty-six different passages on this topic for a total of sixty-three separate allusions, and his favorite verse, which he employs seven times, is Galatians 6:9: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Two qualities of this verse easily account for his preference: it treats his favorite theme by appealing to his second favorite theme, diligence, and it is encouraging. With the exception of description, encouragement is his favorite use for the Bible. In the early 1820s and throughout the 1830s, he invoked Galatians 6:9 in letters to his mother, his brother Alick, William Graham, and John Bull (*CL* 1:292 and 300; 2:240; 6:111 and 442; 7:319; and 9:202). In five of the seven instances, he applies the verse to himself—three times solely to himself and twice to both himself and his correspondent. Although the Calvinism in which he was reared preached salvation by faith, not good works, his frequent appeals to this verse and others on proper conduct indicate that he struggled to accept this idea, as do his attempts to apply verses on God's providence. By his own account, his parents were examples of righteous living, and their actions undoubtedly spoke more powerfully to him than the church's doctrine, leaving him anxious to emulate their conduct, uncertain that faith alone was enough if his parents' lives implied otherwise. Further, in several of his seven uses of the verse, Carlyle employs it to construe work, especially literary work, as “doing good.” This usage of the verse, combined with

the facts that he used it in the 1820s and 1830s, when his success as an author was still far from assured, and that he did not employ it at all after 1837, when *The French Revolution* was published and his career was secure, suggests that he invoked it out of anxiety not only about right conduct but about his career as well.

On fifty-nine separate occasions Carlyle employs twenty-two different passages that concern work. Four verses on the theme were his favorites: Proverbs 22:29, which he uses ten times; John 9:4, which he also uses in ten instances; Isaiah 48:22, which he employs seven times; and Ecclesiastes 9:10, to which he appeals five times. The verse from Proverbs assures the prosperity of a good workman: “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.” The aspiring author surely must have read in this favorite verse a guarantee that he would make a name for himself as an author if he were diligent. He used Proverbs 22:29 in the 1820s and 1830s as he used Galatians 6:9—to encourage himself, his brothers, and other aspiring young authors in their as yet uncertain careers (CL 2:128; 5:16, 96, and 189; 6:273 and 321; 7:115; and 9:336). Another verse, John 9:4, appears in the 1820s and 1830s; however, unlike the verse in Proverbs, Carlyle continued to use it frequently into the 1850s for a good reason. Although Proverbs 22:29 looks forward with optimism, promising reward to the responsible workman, John 9:4 looks forward with apprehension, warning that time is growing short: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” Just as the former fits the young man, the latter suits the older man, who sees time running out. Ecclesiastes 9:10 sounds a similar note, warning the workman to work now, for there is no work in the grave, and Carlyle used it five times from 1819 to 1840. Finally, he alludes to work seven times by invoking Isaiah 48:22, which he may have favored in part because it also incorporates his favorite theme of good conduct: “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.” Like John 9:4, this verse was a favorite later in life, with only two uses occurring before 1837. Five times Carlyle applies the verse to himself: three times to complain of lack of rest, once to describe being disturbed by un-

wanted visitors, and once to complain that he must make a visit the next day (CL 8:228; 17:52 and 217; 22:95; and 25:51). While his classifying himself among “the wicked” on these occasions is doubtless sincere at one level, for Carlyle considered himself just as much a sinner as the next man, it is ironic on another, and his tone at times betrays impatience, even resentment, at the amount of labor involved in accomplishing goals he considered good, not wicked, or at the need to expend energy on tasks that did not advance his good goals. His frustration here also reflects the time in his life when he made these allusions; although with John 9:4 he urges himself to work for the night is coming, he undoubtedly expected that writing would be a little easier when he had been doing it for twenty or more years.³

The prevalence of work in the verses to which Carlyle alludes reflects his anxiety to emulate his father as a skilled and successful workman and, to a lesser extent, his concern that his brothers do the same. As he recalls in his *Reminiscences* (1881),

This great maxim of Philosophy he had gathered by the teaching of

³Carlyle also applies this verse once to each of his closest brothers, Alick and John, editorializing on both occasions. Writing to Alick on May 6, 1828, he said, “There is no rest for the wicked, nor the righteous either, in this world,” and writing to Jean Aitken Carlyle about John on October 16, 1840, he said, “No rest for the wicked,—nor for some others not altogether wicked!” (CL 4:373 and 12:289). In talking about the labor of others, Carlyle’s tone is much more lighthearted, and he adapted the scripture to insure that he did not offend either Alick or Jean by implying that either of his brothers was wicked. The very idea of wickedness or the word “wicked” itself apparently amused Carlyle, for he plays with the term on other occasions using other verses. He wrote to Jane on March 22, 1824, to tease her about the wickedness of wives, and on July 18, 1838, he alluded again to the same verses, Acts 5:1–3, to joke with John about Jane’s wickedness (CL 3:52 and 10:126). He joked with his mother on June 12, 1834, about the trouble he had finding a house by saying that at least his troubles would cease before those of the wicked, which cease only at the grave (CL 7:209). Finally, he wrote to John Forster on May 3, 1840, that he would pray for his own health “[i]f the prayers of the wicked availed anything,” once again categorizing him-

nature alone: That man was created to work, not to speculate, or feel, or dream. Accordingly he set his whole heart thitherwards: he did work wisely and unweariedly (“*ohne Hast aber ohne Rast*”) [without haste but without rest], and perhaps *performed* more (with the tools he had) than any man I now know. (8)

Carlyle speaks with great admiration for his father throughout the *Reminiscences*, even asserting that he sees himself as “only the continuation, and *second volume* of my Father” (38). James Carlyle’s example of diligent work, his strongly-voiced opinions on the subject, and his disdain for the shoddy workman would certainly have generated great anxiety to be a good workman in a son who held his father in such esteem. Carlyle’s choice to pursue a career in letters, not in the church as his father had intended, would only have amplified this feeling.⁴

Carlyle alludes forty-seven times to thirty-one different verses with the theme of judgment, punishment, or curses. His favorite passages on this theme are Joel 3:2 and Daniel 5:5–29. His use of the verse from Joel about God’s judgment of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat appears to reflect no standing issue of concern (CL 20:137; 27:97 and 115; and 29:230). He applies the passage from Daniel about the curse on King Nebuchadnezzar foretold in the handwriting on the wall exclusively to describe or complain about conditions in England: financial and political scandals, free trade and *laissez-faire*, and, twice, the new government administration (CL 23:156; 24:299; and 27:54 and 57). Carlyle’s use of the passage in this way reflects his anxiety about the condition of England, a concern that shaped his social and political commentary and that began to grow extreme in the years in which these allusions appear.

The theme that appears next most often in Carlyle’s biblical allusions can be roughly defined as the relation between the temporal and the eternal. He invokes nineteen different passages on this topic in a total of forty-seven separate allusions, and four verses on the theme are his favorites: Matthew 26:41, which he employs nine times; Psalms

⁴On the significance of Carlyle’s father in Carlyle’s anxious struggle for the

139:14, which appears on eight occasions; Hebrews 13:14, to which he alludes six times; and Ecclesiastes 1:2, which he employs in five instances. The verse from Matthew commands, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," and may have been one of Carlyle's favorites in part because it also incorporates his favorite theme, righteous living. He uses this verse with a wide variety of correspondents, but in five of nine instances he puts it to the same use: to describe, excuse, or complain about his inability to accomplish a task, from composing a letter to making a trip advancing his current literary project (CL 2:289; 5:83; 8:248; 28:235; and 29:190). Although the theme of this verse is not work, his usage of it reflects his abiding concern with self-discipline and his frustration or guilt at his inability to achieve perfect self-control in order to produce. He also uses Psalms 139:14, which praises God that man is "fearfully and wonderfully made," with several correspondents, but his use of this verse is not clearly related to a particular area of concern. He employs it for serious purposes, such as commenting on death, but also to joke (CL 8:99 and 298; 21:207; and 26:172). He invokes Hebrews 13:14, which reminds Christians not to expect stability on earth, to announce moves, such as his journey home from Scotsbrig, or to comfort others when disruptive changes occur, such as the breakup of the Craigenputtoch household (CL 17:69 and 6:90). He uses Ecclesiastes 1:2, which remarks the vanity of all earthly concerns, to express his opinion of everything from a Royal Society party to histories of Frederick the Great, usually in a tone of complete exasperation (CL 11:86 and 28:28). Although his allusions to Hebrews reflect his concern to maintain equanimity in the face of temporal changes, his references to Ecclesiastes betray his frustration with others who do not share his eternal perspective.

Carlyle alludes forty-two times to thirty different verses about God's providence. Of these uses, two are particularly intriguing. In letters to William MacCall and Joseph Neuberg, Carlyle applies the Bible in a way which further indicates significant tension between reliance on faith and confidence in works. In his letter to MacCall on November 3, 1848, he used 1 Kings 17:16, which describes a widow's

jug of oil which never runs dry. In the verse, the writer offers this miraculous cruse as testimony to God's power and providence. Carlyle referred to this verse at the conclusion of a long letter suggesting a number of ways his correspondent might support himself by authorship: "And believe in general that I, for one, would gladly help you if I could, and, in any case, pray let me know before the *cruse* quite fail" (CL 23:149). The fundamental idea of the verse is that God will provide, yet Carlyle used it to advise the young man to return to him for help if God does *not* provide. Similarly, in his letter to Joseph Neuberg on December 24, 1850, Carlyle alluded to John 5:1-15 in which John recounts the story of Jesus' healing a man at a pool. In the biblical account, invalids surround a pool the waters of which are believed to have healing powers when they stir, but one crippled man can never reach the waters before their periodic stirring has ceased. Encountering the man, Jesus heals him with a word. Speaking again on the topic of finding employment, Carlyle told Neuberg,

A man, in all countries, has to 'wait at the pool'; to look out assiduously for opportunities and capabilities; snatching them up as they arise, and diligently having for himself a way thro' the abyss by them. For it is an ever-fluctuating, madly boiling abyss, except so far as we can control it and subdue it, to one and all of us. (CL 25:319)

As with 1 Kings 17:16, Carlyle applies the story from John 5 in a way that directly contradicts the essence of the passage. In John's account the lame man is healed *not* because of his own industry or wits, but, rather, because Jesus in his mercy heals him. The story suggests that man is healed by God's grace, not his own works, but Carlyle uses the account to urge Neuberg to seek a new position diligently, once again placing success in the hands of man, not God, and betrays his anxiety that perhaps God will *not* take care of the writer who does not shift for himself.

Carlyle uses twenty-three verses on the theme of relationships for thirty-nine allusions. His favorite verse, which he employs seven times,

commands Christians to love one another, and his second favorite, which he uses four times, advises them to bear each other's burdens (John 13:4; Galatians 6:2). All of his references to John 13:14 are directed to his immediate family, and all but two occurred in the months following the death of James Carlyle, suggesting that these allusions spring from Carlyle's concern about his family in the absence of the member he considered their leader (CL 6:98, 199, 207, 227, and 277). He invokes Galatians 6:2 to admonish Jane to be tolerant in their marriage and to counsel Jean Carlyle to be obedient and patient with her parents (CL 4:118 and 6:78). Both uses reflect his concern to maintain domestic peace. Finally, his misquotation of Ephesians 5:21, which he uses to inform Jane that her mother will not be living with them after their marriage, reveals his anxiety to establish, at long last, his "own four walls," a domain in which his word will be law (CL 4:68-70).

Carlyle alludes thirty-eight times to twenty verses on the theme of hardship or suffering vs. reward or comfort. His favorite verses on the theme are Amos 6:1, which warns against becoming comfortable in Zion, Psalms 102:6-7, which describe the poet's loneliness and desolation, and Psalms 137:5, in which the poet wishes for his right hand to forget its skill to play the harp if he forgets Jerusalem. All three verses share the idea, which also pervades Carlyle's favorite verses on the temporal vs. the eternal and on death, that the believer's home is not in this world but in eternity with God. The believer may experience hardship on earth, but it is better for him to endure this difficulty and keep his sights on eternity than to become comfortable in the world of time, to play his harp in exile. Carlyle employs Amos 6:1 most often to disapprove of friends or acquaintances who he believed were too content or secure, and his three applications of the verse to Emerson in 1847 (twice) and 1850 reflect the emergence in 1847 of significant differences that placed considerable stress on their relationship (CL 22:186; 25:187 and 280; Slater 35-38). He uses Psalms 102:6-7 to construct his social isolation and spiritual desolation as inevitable consequences of his devotion to his religion of authorship, thus alleviating his anxiety about these circumstances (CL 1:53; 19:141; 29:153; 30:59; and 28:126). Psalms 137:5 always appears in his letters in reference to writ-

ing—three times regarding letter writing and once in connection with writing literature, and he uses the verse to construct writing as a measure of the writer's consciousness of eternity (CL 4:308; 8:203; 10:187; and 22:90). Inability to write indicates loss of focus on eternity and acceptance of exile, while writing indicates spiritual health. Such a construction alleviates his anxiety over whether writing is indeed a divine service worthy of his devotion.

Carlyle alludes thirty-three times to fifteen different verses on faith. Most often, he uses Job 13:15 on faith in God despite affliction, Ecclesiastes 11:1 about casting bread on agitated waters and finding it later, and Luke 7:9 on Jesus' amazement at the centurion's faith. His use of these verses reflects the issues over which he felt the most concern in different decades: in the 1830s he employed the verses from Ecclesiastes and Luke to discuss work in general and particularly his own authorship, while in the 1840s he used Job to treat the topic of death. He applies Ecclesiastes twice to encourage himself to continue writing, once to encourage an acquaintance to have faith in the success of his book, and once each to his brother and John Stuart Mill to encourage them in their own work (CL 9:395; 8:19; 9:373; and 6:270 and 349). His use of this verse to construct work, especially his own authorship, as an act of faith enabled him not only to alleviate his anxiety about whether his exertions and the efforts of those for whom he was also anxious will ultimately succeed but also to address the tension between faith and works by neatly collapsing them into one. Luke 7:9 appears in Carlyle's letters five times—three times seriously, once as a benign joke, and once as sarcasm (CL 4:20 and 133; 8:134; 10:233; and 8:288). Of the serious references, two appear in letters to Jane immediately before their marriage and describe her faith in him—presumably in both his love for her and his ability to provide for her by career success. The third in a letter to John Sterling in 1835 referred to Sterling's faith in Carlyle specifically as an author. In these early allusions Carlyle constructed his career success not as an object of his own faith, but as an object of the faith of others, thus supplying himself further reassurance that he would ultimately succeed.

II. CARLYLE'S FAVORITE GENRES AND BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Just as anxiety accounts best for the pattern in the themes of Carlyle's allusions, it is also the best explanation, along with intellectual curiosity, for his preference for certain genres and books of the Bible. Wisdom literature, found in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, is overrepresented in Carlyle's biblical allusions. Although these books together form only 7.1 percent of the Bible, 15.1 percent of Carlyle's biblical allusions are to verses of this genre. He refers to wisdom literature roughly twice as often (2.14 percent) as one would expect, given the proportion it forms of the Bible. Though his use of wisdom literature is out of proportion to its occurrence in the Bible, his heavy use of this genre makes perfect sense in several ways. First, wisdom literature represents an attempt to discern order in the world through the application of reason (Hill and Walton 319). Anxiety would have attracted him to a genre which implies that one can understand the world and succeed in life if one will only follow reason. Moreover, wisdom literature rests on the idea that knowledge gained by experience can be transmitted to others in words in order to guide the reader to success in life (319). This premise is the very principle which justifies all education and forms the basis of Carlyle's attempts throughout his career to guide his countrymen away from various perceived perils in order to prevent individual or national disaster.

Wisdom literature is of two types: the "didactic or practical" wisdom found mostly in Proverbs and the "philosophical, speculative, or even pessimistic wisdom" of Job and Ecclesiastes (320-21). The latter type is "critical, reflective, and questioning as it delves into the deeper and more vexing issues confronting humankind" (321). While Carlyle's use of Proverbs about as often as one might expect attests to the value he placed on practical wisdom, his critical, philosophical mind was clearly drawn most strongly to the philosophical, speculative wisdom to be found in Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes was Carlyle's favorite wisdom book as well as one of his four favorite books, regardless of genre. While it makes up only 0.7 percent of the Bible, it represents 4.9 of Carlyle's biblical allusions, seven times what one might expect. His preference for Ecclesiastes over Job, the other book of speculative

wisdom, may lie in the fact that the writer of Ecclesiastes approaches the question of God's justice uniquely: he "build[s] his case without any presuppositions about revelation. He ma[akes] no reference to the Law or the Prophets, and nothing [is] said about Israel's place in God's plan or the covenant. His approach [is] philosophical and based on experience and wisdom" (Hill and Walton 371). The basis of this argument in reason and experience, not revelation, surely would have appealed to Carlyle and most likely accounts for his preferring this book over Job.

Carlyle uses the gospels almost twice as often (1.9 percent) as their part within the entire Bible would suggest, and he favors Matthew especially. Matthew forms only 3.4 percent of the Bible; however, it represents 10.8 percent of Carlyle's allusions to scripture; he uses this gospel about three times (3.16 percent) as often as would be expected, given its size. Furthermore, although Matthew forms only 28.3 percent of the verses in the four gospels, an astounding 47.2 percent of Carlyle's references to the gospels are to Matthew. Writing to his brother John on August 10, 1835, he identified the "Gospel of Saint Matthew" as one of man's greatest works, and he listed it as one of the "truly important writings we have" in a letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton on April 12, 1844 (CL 8:183 and 18:9). His most important statement about Matthew, and John, however, occurred in a letter to Mill on October 5, 1833:

Best of all do I sympathize with you in regard to the New Testament. Every wor[d I] say is spoken out of my heart. Great, soul-inspiring, unfathomable in significance, is that poor artless Biography by Saint Matthew! Of all *Antigigmen* too, in any time in any place, the greatest is that divine Hero of St Matthew. A thousand times have his words, even thro' all these impediments, brought life and hope back into my heart: I have wept warm tears, as I thought of him; and how the voice of his Glad Tidings (the *gladdest* of all; for it was of man's indefeasible divineness) had gone forth to all lands, had reached even the English land and me. "*Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world!*": I!—if you consider that, and

who the I was, a whole gospel lies in it.—St John I regard with you as a kind of *didactic* Biographer, less taken with his hero than with what he fancies to be his hero's philosophy; of far inferior value therefore; less artless, perhaps one might say less sincere. (CL 7:23–24)

What Carlyle says here is interesting for a number of reasons. First, his wholehearted agreement with Mill suggests his anxiety to strengthen a bond with a friend who seemed to be showing new interest in Christianity. It is hard to explain his remarks about John's gospel otherwise, for allusions to John comprise 24.3 percent of his allusions to the gospels, almost twice as much as warranted by the size of this gospel relative to the others.⁵ In fact, he supported his emotional endorsement of Matthew's gospel in this very letter with a quotation, not from Matthew but from John! What he said here about Matthew's depiction of Christ is most important, however, because it makes undeniably clear the emotional basis of his attraction to this gospel. Wisdom literature appealed to Carlyle's brain, allaying anxiety by appealing to reason, but the gospel of Matthew cut straight to his heart, providing neither speculation nor guidance in right conduct but, rather, a hero who spoke to his anxious need for faith itself.⁶

Carlyle also invokes epistles almost twice as often as their part within the entire Bible would suggest, and he favors Hebrews especially. Although Hebrews forms only 1.0 percent of the Bible, it represents 4.6 percent of Carlyle's allusions to scripture. Of the epistles only, Hebrews forms 10.9 percent, but it forms 27.4 percent of Carlyle's references to epistles. Two of Carlyle's favorite verses are found in this book: Hebrews 12:1 on throwing off all that hinders Christian commitment, to which he alludes five times and Hebrews 13:14 on the tran-

⁵Carlyle alludes to Matthew most frequently (47.2 percent), John often (24.3 percent), Luke less often (16.7 percent), and Mark least often (11.8 percent).

⁶Mill's defensive letter in response to Carlyle's emotional outpouring may account for Carlyle's sidestepping Sterling's criticism in 1835 that he did not believe in a personal God (CL 8:136–37). Carlyle may have felt he had learned better than to be so emotionally open about his beliefs.

sience of earthly life, which he mentions six times. Carlyle may have preferred Hebrews because it focuses on many of his favorite themes. In fact, the themes of the verses he pulls most frequently from Hebrews closely parallel the themes of the verses he uses from Ecclesiastes. Of those verses from Ecclesiastes and from Hebrews that are used more than once, 17.86 percent from Ecclesiastes and 13.04 percent from Hebrews speak of work and diligence, 28.57 percent from Ecclesiastes and 26.09 percent from Hebrews treat temporal vs. eternal life, 17.86 percent from Ecclesiastes and 13.04 percent from Hebrews focus on faith, and 17.86 percent from Ecclesiastes and 13.04 percent from Hebrews deal with God's sovereignty. Whether he is using the Old Testament or the New, wisdom or epistle, Carlyle locates books and verses which express themes that address his preoccupations.⁷

III. ALLUSIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Among those correspondents who received more than one percent of the total number of letters Carlyle wrote between 1812 and 1855, eight individuals received more allusions than might have been expected, given the number of letters to them, while seven others received considerably fewer allusions than expected (see Figure 2).⁸

⁷Among genres he does not favor, Carlyle does favor certain books. His favorite book of the Pentateuch is Genesis, of history 2 Samuel, and of prophecy Zechariah. While Genesis represents only 26.2 percent of the Pentateuch, 62.3 percent of Carlyle's references to these five books are to Genesis, something over twice as many (2.38) as one would expect. Genesis may predominate because of its opening chapters, which tell the story of the creation of the world and give the primeval history which accounts for man's predicament in relation to God. This explanation seems especially likely considering that fully twenty (54 percent) of Carlyle's thirty-seven references to Genesis are from chapters one through eleven, while the remaining thirty-nine chapters provide only seventeen (46 percent) of his allusions. Carlyle's love for 2 Samuel 12:23, to which he alludes no fewer than eight times, accounts for the prevalence of 2 Samuel, as his liking for Zechariah 4:10, to which he alludes seven times, explains the prevalence of Zechariah.

Figure 2: Allusions/Letters Ratios of 1%+ Correspondents

<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Correspondent</u>	<u>Occupation/Relation</u>	<u>Correspondence</u>
2.41	Ralph Waldo Emerson	Author/Minister/Friend	1834-1855
2.27	Alexander Carlyle	Brother	1819-1855
1.84	John Stuart Mill	Author/Friend	1831-1852
1.66	John Sterling	Author/Minister/Friend	1835-1844
	(June 1834-Feb 1835)		
1.60	Margaret Aitken Carlyle	Mother	1817-1853
1.29	Lady Harriet Ashburton	Friend	1842-1855
1.00	John A. Carlyle	Brother	1819-1855
0.97	JBW/JWC	Wife	1821-1855
0.77	Edward Fitzgerald	Friend	1842-1855
0.73	Richard Monckton Milnes	Friend	1837-1855
0.70	James Carlyle, younger	Brother	1832-1855
0.70	Jean Carlyle Aitken	Sister	1822-1855
0.38	Joseph Neuberg	Friend	1839-1855
0.28	John Forster	Friend	1839-1855
0.00	Chapman and Hall	Publishers	1842-1854

Those people with whom Carlyle used biblical allusions most frequently fit easily into at least one of four categories: ministers (Emerson and Sterling), authors (Emerson, Sterling, and Mill), friends (Emerson, Sterling, Mill, and Harriet Baring), and family (Alexander Carlyle, Margaret Aitken Carlyle, and John A. Carlyle). It was not enough simply to be a minister, relative, or friend, however, for some family members (Jean Aitken Carlyle, James Carlyle, the elder, and James Carlyle, the younger) and some friends (Edward Fitzgerald, Joseph Neuberg, and

⁸Because Carlyle wrote many more letters to some correspondents than others, looking at the raw number of biblical allusions he included to each recipient discloses little of value. A more revealing statistic is the ratio of his

John Forster) received far fewer biblical allusions than the size of Carlyle's correspondence with them would indicate. Neither does a different level of intimacy account for the distinction, for Carlyle considered Fitzgerald and Forster close friends (Kaplan 262). Just as anxiety accounts best for the pattern in the themes of Carlyle's allusions and his preferences for certain genres and books, it also offers the best explanation for the pattern of his biblical allusions among his correspondents. He alludes to the Bible most in the context of relationships characterized not simply by great familiarity but by a certain emotional intensity or anxiety as well.

Sterling's and Emerson's training as ministers might alone explain Carlyle's heavy use of the Bible in his letters to them, but his relations with each of these men were also particularly intense and conflicted. Emerson's enthusiastic response to *Sartor Resartus*—one of only two positive responses to the work Carlyle received when it was initially published—and his tireless efforts on Carlyle's behalf in the American publication of both *Sartor* and *The French Revolution* evoked devoted gratitude from Carlyle. When the two men met at Craigenputtoch, however, Emerson's initial impression of the Scots-man was that there were "men of far less power who had yet greater insight into religious truth," and fundamental moral and political conflicts eventually surfaced between the two friends (Rusk 1:394). Carlyle discovered that Emerson "held beliefs of a bland and innocent sort which directly contradicted his own; worse, Emerson not only rejected his solution to the problems of the time but scoffed at it" (Slater 35). Only a sight-seeing tour together to Stonehenge in July 1848 enabled the two men to agree to disagree, and distance preserved the friendship in ensuing years (39, 43).

The very fact that Carlyle felt compelled to write Sterling's biography indicates a profound emotional investment in his friend, and the biography itself suggests a number of reasons for this intensity. Carlyle might have seen in Sterling's father a parallel with his own; he certainly describes Sterling's father in a way which contrasts with his own father in the details but resembles him in the broad picture—a strong personality, a true man, an economically successful leader in his commu-

nity (*Life* 234–37). Carlyle would have also seen a parallel between the women in his own life and Sterling’s loving mother and sickly wife (243–48). Most importantly, Carlyle would have seen himself in Sterling’s struggle to find a career, reject the ministry, and turn to literature (121–22). Despite his identification with Sterling, however, Carlyle also devotes considerable attention in the biography to two issues of continual and profound conflict in their relationship—religion and poetry. The two argued at length over what Sterling perceived as Carlyle’s lack of belief in a “personal God” and Sterling’s insistence on writing poetry despite Carlyle’s preference for prose (123–24, 203–04, 250). In Carlyle’s friendship with Sterling strong identification combined with striking differences to create an emotionally charged relationship between two intense personalities.⁹

From May 18, 1833, when Mill first called Carlyle’s attention to a “considerable extent of undiscussed and unsifted divergence of opinion,” to Carlyle’s assertion on April 18, 1834, that he felt “as if it were rather questionable to meddle at all with these Beliefs of yours,” Carlyle’s relations with Mill were also emotionally fraught (*Mineka* 1:153; *CL* 7:133). Carlyle viewed Mill as a potential convert on both political and religious issues (Neff 17); however, their correspondence reveals that Mill rigorously resisted this construction, once he understood that Carlyle saw him in this light. Mill’s umbrage is evident in his vigorous self-defense:

I have for years had the very same idea of Christ, & the same unbounded reverence for him as now; it was because of this rever-

⁹Given the intensity brought on by Carlyle’s personal identification with Sterling and two such striking sources of contention, it could be hard to account for the success of the friendship, if it were not for one revealing passage in the biography: “When the blows of contradiction came too thick, he could with consummate dexterity whisk aside out of their way; prick into his adversary on some new quarter; or gracefully flourishing his weapon, end the duel in some handsome manner” (*Life* 124). Where Emerson was contemptuous and Mill rigorously logical, Sterling was socially skilled, and this difference in personality appears to account for the success of a friendship every bit as intense as Carlyle’s troubled relationships with Mill and Emerson.

ence that I sought a more perfect acquaintance with the records of his life, that indeed gave new life to the reverence, which in any case was becoming or was closely allied with all that was becoming a living principle in my character. (Mineka 1:208–09)

His friend's proud and defensive reaction seems to have moved Carlyle to reassess Mill's emotional openness to a deeper understanding of the gospel and the wisdom of continuing the conversation on the same level; he may have felt that he had been betrayed into revealing emotionally intimate details about his own belief by what could have appeared to him after the fact as Mill's pose of ignorance in an earlier letter.¹⁰ At this point the overt discussion of their differences ceases, with Carlyle's request on January 20, 1834, that Mill remain silent on "that highest Discrepancy of ours," a move which in itself attests to Carlyle's discomfort with their disagreement (CL 7:72). Although the surface was healed, Mill's defensive response did nothing to allay Carlyle's anxiety for him, which manifests itself in Carlyle's continuing heavy use of biblical allusions in letters to Mill as late as March 1835, when the burning of the manuscript of *The French Revolution* generated anxiety sufficient to precipitate a complete emotional cutoff.

Carlyle's relationship with Harriet Ashburton was not intense because of the strong identification, accompanied by philosophical, religious, and political differences, of his friendships but, rather, because of his attraction to her and his long-standing awe of the aristocracy. Lady

¹⁰In his letter to Carlyle on October 5, 1833, Mill seems to imply that he was untutored in Christianity: "A propos I have been reading the New Testament; properly I can never be said to have read it before" (Mineka 1:182). In response on October 28, 1833, Carlyle applauded Mill's intellectual insights into the gospels and openly shared his personal, emotional experience of God (CL 7:23–24). All was well at this point, but Carlyle's assertion on December 17, 1833, that he gave Mill his opinion of Jesus with "greater freedom," now that Mill had "read the *New Testament*, and understood it *anew*," apparently insulted Mill, who wrote on January 12, 1834, that his reading of the New Testament, while it seemed to have "formed . . . an era" in Carlyle's "opinion & feeling" about Mill, had "made no new impression, only strengthened the best of the

Ashburton did not challenge Carlyle to the sort of intimacy that revealed differences of opinion and precipitated highly charged clashes; rather, she simply exerted her wit to amuse and enthrall him, rendering him eager for her attention and anxious to impress her. There is no evidence that Carlyle experienced any internal conflict over his feelings for Lady Ashburton, but the relationship caused considerable conflict in his marriage and would have caused him an additional, different type of anxiety for that reason (Kaplan 300–13, 350–51, 400–02; Ashton 238–40, 260–61, 268–71, 294–95).¹¹

Carlyle's relationships with two of his brothers were also particularly close and intense. Of his brothers, John was his "closest companion," while Alick was his "favorite" (Kaplan 27, 60). The distribution of Carlyle's letters among his brothers attests to different levels of intimacy;

¹¹Carlyle's use of the Bible with Lady Ashburton varies more widely from the norm than his correspondence with any other individual to whom he wrote more than 1 percent of his letters and with whom he used biblical allusions liberally, reflecting the different kind of intensity that characterized his relationship with her. While he uses the Bible for description in something near the expected percentage (60 percent), he did not use the Bible at all for any of the four other purposes that prevail in his letters: encouraging, admonishing, comforting, and counseling. One might expect a Victorian man to offer a woman significant admonition and counsel, and Carlyle was always ready to give advice in other relationships, but he apparently thought Lady Ashburton would not welcome such an approach. Neither does he use the Bible to encourage or comfort her; to offer such would perhaps have violated the emotional distance that governed their relationship and made it attractive. Carlyle employs Bible verses on a number of topics in his letters to Lady Ashburton, but whatever the theme of the verse he turns it to a light use in her case. For example, he alludes to verses that concern judgment or curses a full 20 percent, while the norm is 7.48 percent, but he uses this heavy theme to describe everyday things and events: Liverpool on September 13, 1845, the new government administration on February 28, 1852, the weather on December 3, 1853, and his own state of mind on January 3, 1855 (CL 19:192; 27:54; 28:332; and 29:230). Three out of four of his allusions to verses about the earthly vs. the heavenly (also high at 20 percent) are for similarly light purposes, including one use to promise Lady Ashburton that he will be a "good Boy" (CL 26:70 and 172; 27:54; and 30:139). The same verse on good deeds that he uses seriously to urge a friend to resume

Carlyle wrote James only fifty-one letters from 1832 to 1855, compared with 548 to John from 1819 to 1855 and 204 to Alick from 1819 to 1855; nevertheless, concern, not just familiarity, is the vital factor here (Kaplan 144, 316). Carlyle was more worried about John and Alick, who both struggled to make their ways in the world, than about Jamie, who stayed home and farmed successfully at Scotsbrig, or about his sister, Jean Aitken Carlyle, who married happily in the early 1830s (Kaplan 316). Indeed, 27.69 percent of Carlyle's allusions to the Bible in letters to Alick are to encourage, as are 14.47 percent of those to John, while Carlyle never uses the Bible with James or Jean for this purpose. Further, Carlyle's frequent use of verses about joy in letters to John reflects the struggle they shared to look on the bright side when career prospects seemed dim. On May 9, 1823, for example, Carlyle used Zechariah 4:10 about taking joy in small things to encourage his brother to rejoice in the small piece of translation work he must do, and on August 15, 1833, he used it again to report two positive, among many negative, responses to *Sartor* (CL 2:348 and 7:272). The prevalence of verses concerning God's sovereignty in Carlyle's letters to Alick also reflects another cause for concern on this brother's behalf, the deaths of his son and his daughter.

employs to tell Lady Ashburton to display a certain picture prominently (4:305 and 29:204). A verse on the plague of darkness that he uses to depict Jane's depression describes the weather in a letter to Lady Ashburton (CL 21:29 and 28:332). A verse about the wonder of man's nature, used several times in other correspondence to comment on death, Carlyle uses with Lady Ashburton to joke about the fact that man is mostly water (CL 8:99 and 299; 21:207; and 26:172). His comfort with using verses treating serious themes, verses which he puts to serious purposes in other contexts, not only reveals something about the nature of his relations with Lady Ashburton but also demonstrates an attitude toward the Bible that he expressed in a letter to John Childs on January 13, 1851: I "do not pretend to worship the Bible, but do pretend to recognize it and believe it, and try to *do it*" (CL 26:16). He took the Bible seriously, but he was not so reverent that he refused to apply it to describe the everyday, to make a joke, or even to flirt when he saw the opportunity.

Finally, Carlyle was much closer to his mother than his father, and their relationship was also more intense. From 1818 to 1831 James Carlyle received only 0.36 percent of Carlyle's letters (thus his absence from Figure 2), while Margaret Aitken Carlyle received eighty-five letters over the same period and a total of 454 letters before her death late in 1853, that is, 10.12 percent of all Carlyle's letters before 1855. The most telling indicator of the nature of their relationship is Carlyle's frank report to her about his wedding night, sent, at her express command, within two days of the wedding and without Jane's perusal (Kaplan 117–20). One particular aspect of his use of the Bible in his letters to his mother reflects not only his intimacy with her but also a particular anxiety to demonstrate to her that he was trying to live by Scripture: he employs the Bible frequently in his letters to her to encourage, admonish, counsel, and comfort *himself*. She was his audience, the all-seeing one in front of whom he acted out the gravest internal dramas of his life. The issues to which he applies the Bible in his letters to her are those that caused him the most anxiety—right conduct, diligence and success in his work, and maintaining focus on eternity, among other things.

Carlyle uses the Bible with Jane almost exactly as much as one would expect, given the volume of his letters to her (the ratio of allusions to letters is 0.97); thus, she does not qualify as a high-allusion recipient. Carlyle's use of the Bible with Jane resembles that with Lady Ashburton in that he employs it only once to encourage Jane and once to counsel her. His practice with Jane resembles that with his mother in that three of his four admonishments using Scripture are to admonish himself.

IV. CARLYLE'S FAVORITE USES FOR THE BIBLE

As one would expect of any writer familiar with the Bible, Carlyle alludes to it to help him describe anything and everything, with 43.31 percent of his references serving this purpose (see Figure 3). Other purposes served by more than five percent of his allusions are to encourage (9.55 percent), to admonish (9.39 percent), to comfort (6.05 percent), and to counsel (5.41 percent).

Description	43.31%
Encouragement	9.55%
Admonishment	9.39%
Comforting	6.05%
Counseling	5.41%

Figure 3: Carlyle’s Favorite Uses for the Bible

All the purposes for which Carlyle employs

the Bible attempt to alleviate anxiety, either by constructing events or issues in a reassuring way or by influencing the opinions or behaviors of others about whom he is anxious.¹²

One of the most troubling issues that Carlyle confronted by using the Bible was his own career as an author. In a letter to his mother on January 2, 1827, he referred to himself as a “kind of missionary,” and biblical allusions enable him to recruit the authority of the Bible not only to construct authorship as an act of faith, as a good deed that glorifies God, as a calling, and as evangelism, but also to conceptualize

¹²Carlyle also uses the Bible for a variety of additional purposes that attempt to diffuse anxiety directly or indirectly: to joke (3.66 percent), to comment (3.5 percent), to complain (2.55 percent), to reprove (1.59 percent), and to wish (1.59 percent). Joking alleviates anxiety by getting others to laugh about an issue of concern to the joker—if one can laugh about this issue, the joke implies, it is not truly worth the joker’s concern—and Carlyle uses the Bible in jokes mostly with Jane (6.49 percent), John (5.26 percent), and Lady Ashburton (5.00 percent). Commentary alleviates anxiety by shaping the correspondent’s opinion on some issue of concern to the commentator, and Carlyle invokes the Bible as commentary mainly in letters to Lady Ashburton (5.00 percent) and Mill (4.55 percent). Complaining alleviates anxiety simply by expressing the complainant’s concern, and Carlyle uses the Bible for this purpose mostly with Sterling (7.69 percent). Reproving alleviates anxiety by attempting to reform a behavior of concern to the reprover, and Carlyle uses the Bible most (5.00 percent) for this purpose with Lady Ashburton. Wishing alleviates anxiety by positing an alternate reality in which the issue of concern is absent or resolved, and Carlyle uses the Bible most (7.69 percent) for this purpose in letters to Sterling.

himself as an evangelist or prophet (CL 4:180; Vanden Bossche 29–31). These constructions alleviate Carlyle’s anxiety about authorship by reaffirming the value of his message, accounting for the hardships he was experiencing and assuring him of ultimate success.

In a letter to Jane on January 3, 1823, Carlyle called writing a “noble art” and used Hebrews 11:4 to praise it as a medium through which the individual can transcend space and time:

Our natural horizon is a circle of some few miles, our earthly date a few brief years; and yet by *this*, our thoughts go from us to the utmost bounds of space and time; hearts that beat in the remotest borders of the world are fired by the sentiments that our[s] have conceived, they love us tho’ unseen, and “being dead we yet speak.” (CL 2:259–60)

The verse in Hebrews to which Carlyle alludes here refers not to writing but to acting by faith: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained a witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” By ascribing to writing the results claimed in the Bible for acting by faith, Carlyle constructs writing as an act of faith and reassures himself of an ultimate reward for keeping that faith.

Writing to Bryan W. Procter on January 17, 1828, Carlyle employed Matthew 5:16 to exhort Procter to resume his professional writing:

Do you not reckon it a sin and a shame to bury that fine sense, that truly Artist-spirit, under a load of week-day business? Ought not your light to shine before men, in this season of [d]im eclipse, when the opaque genius of Utility is shedding disastrous twilig[ht over] half the nations? (CL 4:305).

The verse in Matthew refers not to writing but to good deeds: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” By applying Jesus’ light metaphor to writing, Carlyle’s metaphor constructs authorship as a

good deed and, considering the last portion of the verse, as an action that glorifies God, enabling the young writer to justify the energy and time he is putting into this pursuit.

Carlyle uses 1 Timothy 6:12 to exhort himself to continue his efforts to succeed as an author in London; in a letter to his mother on January 22, 1832, he concluded a long paragraph about his life in the city with the exclamation, "Let us fight the good fight, then! In due time we shall prevail if we faint not" (CL 6:96). The verse in 1 Timothy encourages commitment to Christianity, however, not commitment to authorship: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." By invoking Paul's encouraging phrase to describe his own commitment to authorship, Carlyle conceptualizes authorship as a calling which both requires a level of dedication one would normally associate with religion and also promises significant rewards to the faithful. Such a concept serves, as his construction of authorship as a good deed does, to justify his devotion to his craft.

Carlyle employs a number of verses to construct authorship as evangelism. On September 25, 1830, he used Matthew 13:7-9 in a letter to Goethe to assure the poet that his teachings have been received in England: "Nevertheless the good seed that is sown cannot be trodden down, or altogether choked with tares; and surely it is the highest of all privileges to sow this seed, to have sown it: nay it is privilege enough if we have hands to reap it, and eyes to see it growing!" (CL 4:406). The verses in Matthew are a part of the parable of the sower employed by Jesus to describe the reception of the gospel by hearers in various spiritual conditions: "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." In his letter to Goethe on January 22, 1831, he adapted another agricultural metaphor, from Matthew 9:37, to inform Goethe that he would soon be publishing a review of William Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1830): "I too am to speak a word on the favourite subject; a word of warning and direction, where the harvest is great, and the reapers many and more zealous than experi-

enced” (CL 5:220). Writing to Emerson on February 8, 1839, he used Luke 5:4–9, which concerns Jesus’ calling Peter, James, and John to discipleship through the miraculous catch of fish, to describe the profits from the American edition of *The French Revolution* (CL 11:22). In a letter to his brother John on August 21, 1830, he invoked Revelation 1:9 to describe Dunscore, the parish in which Craigenputtoch was located: “Meanwhile this Dunscore Patmos is simply the place, where of all others in the known world I can live the cheapest; which in the case of a man living by Literature, with little saleable talent, and who would fain not prove a Liar and Scoundrel, this is a momentous point” (CL 5:141–42). The verse from Revelation is “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” With all of these allusions, Carlyle constructs authorship, even writing criticism, as evangelism. This construction reassures him of the truth and value of his message, insures the ultimate success of his venture, justifies to himself the poverty and withdrawal from the civilized world he endures, and, last but not least, alleviates any guilt he might have felt over not entering the ministry.

Not only is authorship evangelism, but Carlyle was an evangelist, at least in his own view. In a letter to his brother John on February 10, 1833, he used Matthew 3:1–4 to describe himself as a savage evangelist: “I am as a John Baptist, girt about with a leathern girdle, and whose food is locusts and wild honey” (CL 6:320). The verses to which he alludes give Matthew’s description of John the Baptist, whose ministry announced the coming of Jesus:

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. (Matt. 3:1–4)

With this comparison to John the Baptist, Carlyle conceptualizes himself as evangelist to a wayward culture, a construction that rationalizes both his economic hardship and his solitary, even lonely, life.¹³ The importance of John the Baptist to Carlyle's construction of authorship is clear from his repeated invocation of this figure—in a letter to William Glen on February 22, 1833, to describe himself, and in a letter to Emerson on May 8, 1841, to describe his correspondent (CL 6:334 and 13:128). Further, on May 8, 1841, he used Isaiah 40:3 to describe Emerson's most recent book (CL 13:128). This verse is the exact passage from Isaiah that Matthew quotes in Matthew 3:1–4. By applying Isaiah 40:3 to Emerson, Carlyle is indirectly applying the same image of authorship to himself and his American friend.

Carlyle saw himself not only as evangelist but as prophet as well. In a letter to his mother on August 10, 1830, he used Matthew 13:57 to discuss the Saint-Simonians' response to "Signs of the Times": "[L]ast week . . . we had a parcel from Paris, addressed to the Author of *Signs of the Times*. The people there seem to think me a very promising man, and that some good will come of me. Thus, a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country. Poor prophet!" (CL 5:140). The verse in Matthew is "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house." By invoking this verse to describe the reception of his work, Carlyle is able to reaffirm to himself and his correspondent the value of his message, to rationalize once again the obstacles he was experiencing in his career, and to rejoice without vanity at his success abroad. Further, in a letter to Jane on September 20, 1847, Carlyle used 1 Kings 17:4–6 to describe the payment he had just received from Wiley and Putnam: "In polite language, they are 'd—d swingla's' for sending no more. I must pocket it as something gained from the mouths of wild ravens" (CL 22:80). In 1 Kings God feeds the prophet Elijah:

¹³The comparison also implies that Carlyle saw himself as in one way a forerunner of another voice yet to come, but there is little elsewhere to support this idea.

And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cerith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. (1 Kgs 17:4-6)

Constructing himself and his experience with this verse enables Carlyle to deal gracefully with what he considers irregular and insufficient remuneration for his writing and to set aside too much worry about financial security; if his sustenance is truly in God's hands, as Elijah's was, he should not complain, nor need he doubt that adequate funds will be provided in the future as they are needed.

Finally, Carlyle did not arrive at his construction of the author as evangelist and prophet without first discarding a construction he found unhelpful. In a letter to Goethe on December 22, 1829, he invoked Genesis 1:2-3 to describe writing: "Were this 'Historical View' once off my hands, I still purpose to try something infinitely greater! Alas! Alas! The huge formless Chaos is here; but no creative Voice to say 'Let there be Light,' and make it into a world" (CL 5:50). In the verses from Genesis, God speaks the universe into being: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." By invoking this verse, Carlyle conceptualizes writing as the ordering of chaos at the same time he confesses his inability to accomplish this ordering. His use of Genesis here flows against the tide of his other biblical metaphors for writing in two important and related ways: first, his focus in this instance is not on the social function of authorship but on the act of writing itself, and, second, the writer stands not in the place of a human prophet but in the place of God himself. Carlyle's use of the Genesis metaphor only once, and as part of an expression of frustration, suggests that he found constructing the writer as creator unhelpful and turned to the figures of evangelist and prophet for more useful ways of interpreting his experience. Perhaps thinking of himself in God's position made him feel overwhelmed and inadequate; as evangelist or prophet, he became

God's conduit instead of God himself, thus solving a variety of problems, including responsibility for the exact content and form of the message.

Another emotionally fraught situation that Carlyle confronted with his Bible was attraction to the opposite sex. Two allusions in his letters to Lady Ashburton are particularly interesting in this connection. First, on November 28, 1853, he used Matthew 9:20–21 in a way that puts her in the position of Christ: "Before the Queen, so bounteous, gracious in all things, my rash wishes and surmises fall dumb,—as they ought to do. And so no more of it. I kiss the hem of your garment" (CL 28:328). The relevant Bible verses read, "And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Carlyle's use of the Bible here is interesting in several respects. First, it elevates Lady Ashburton to a position of worship. Carlyle certainly was ready to worship other men as heroes, but it is unusual for him to place a woman in such a position. Second, in the Bible the woman who touches Jesus' garment has been ill for many years and expects healing to result from touching Jesus' cloak; the move is not simply a show of respect. Carlyle's use of this verse to express his devotion to her suggests not only that he worships her but also that she heals an old wound or supplies a longstanding need. His use of the verse constructs his relationship with her as devoted but distant, erotic but respectful, emotionally rewarding but not emotionally intimate. Through this construction he was able simultaneously to vent his strong feelings and to maintain an emotionally safe distance.

Carlyle's use of Jeremiah 18:6 in a letter to Lady Ashburton on November 13, 1855, is interesting in itself, but it takes on even further significance in light of his letter to Jane on July 4, 1823. To Lady Ashburton Carlyle used the verse to describe the submission of his wishes to her preferences:

In all cases there is One at The Grange, the sight of whom is of the nature of happiness to me; pleasant in all moods and situations hitherto: for the sake of that one, *I* will encounter anything, even

tom Taylor & Co., backed by fond mothers and loud children, of still more formidable objects; and in fact will be as clay in the hands of the potter (or the nearest I can to that) for the sake of seeing you a week or two again, in the way you find possible, if you find any way possible and expedient. (CL 30:113)

The verse in Jeremiah is “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.” To Jane, after protesting against the idea that they are to part forever, Carlyle said, “But in all other points, I am ‘as clay in the hands of the potter’; direct me according to your own sovereign will and pleasure, and see whether I will not comply!” (CL 2:393) If he were in the habit of alluding to Jeremiah’s potter and clay metaphor all the time, perhaps there would be no reason to remark upon these particular two uses; however, he invokes this verse only on these two occasions out of thirty-five years of letter-writing. That he should use with Lady Ashburton exactly the same metaphor that he used with Jane during their courtship, when it appears nowhere else in his correspondence, suggests that he viewed Lady Ashburton much as he regarded Jane before marriage, as an object of courtship, and supports the idea that for a time Lady Ashburton took a place that in some ways rivaled Jane’s in his heart. Whether the object of his courtship is Jane or Lady Ashburton, placing her in the position of God assuages his anxiety by absolving him of responsibility for shaping the relationship himself.

Carlyle’s use of biblical allusions for encouragement is most evident in his letters to his brother Alick, with whom he uses allusions for encouragement 27.69 percent of the time, or almost three times as often as one would expect, given the number of letters to Alick.¹⁴ Although he uses the Bible twice to encourage Alick to be a good or true man and once to encourage him not to worry about the death of his son, the remainder of these allusions encourages him to keep working. Twelve allusions are directed at Alick alone, but six are self-talk, state-

¹⁴See CL (1:300, 337, and 341; 2:128; 4:331; 6:60, 74, 135 [twice], 306, and 356; 7:221 and 319; 8:19; 8:131 [twice]; 10:76; and 19:18).

ments written to someone else but directed either at Carlyle alone or at his correspondent and himself. Carlyle's heavy use of the Bible for encouragement in his letters to Alick reflects a confluence of anxieties. First, he was anxious about Alick himself, with whom his relationship was intense but somewhat conflicted. Second, he was writing in a time of great uncertainty in his own life and in Alick's; in the 1820s and 1830s, both brothers were struggling to make successes of themselves in the world. Third, work itself was a deeply troubling issue for Carlyle. The combination of these factors resulted in his attempt to alleviate anxiety by invoking biblical authority to motivate himself and Alick to keep trying to succeed.

Carlyle also uses the Bible to admonish himself and his correspondents, issuing warnings so that he or a recipient of his letters would not fall prey to some danger that in his mind seemed to threaten. His use of the Bible to admonish is most evident in his letters to his mother, where he uses it for this purpose sixteen percent of the time, or almost twice as often as one would expect, given the number of letters to her.¹⁵ These allusions show an unusual pattern which again suggests that Carlyle alludes to the Bible to address anxieties. While self-talk comprises 34 percent of his allusions overall, fully 75 percent of the admonishments in his letters to his mother are self-talk, with 38 percent directed at Carlyle and others and another 38 percent directed at him alone. Seven of his twelve self-talk admonishments regard work, mostly warning himself to maintain a patient, contented attitude and to continue writing, and of these seven, six appeared between 1830 and 1835, when his success as an author was still far from assured. His heavy use of the Bible for admonishment in his letters to his mother thus reflects mainly his great anxiety about his own career success. Although he was concerned about Alick in the 1830s, before 1837 his main concern was himself, particularly his success as an author. He was not terribly worried about his mother until the death of his father in 1832, and his use of the Bible four times in that year to admonish his family to love each other and to work rather than grieve

¹⁵See *CL* (1:154; 2:261; 5:58 [twice] and 76; 6:38, 98, 112, 199, 207, and 444; 7:294, 314, and 322; 8:278; and 15:234).

reflects his anxiety over his father's death.

Counsel is another way in which Carlyle invokes the authority of the Bible to shape his correspondents' thoughts or actions. He uses the Bible the most for counsel in letters to his brothers, but at levels that are expected. Counsel forms a disproportionate part (9.09 percent) of Carlyle's biblical allusions in his letters to Mill, however, and his two attempts to use the Bible for counseling Mill reflect the anxieties that characterized their friendship. First, Carlyle advised Mill on June 16, 1832, to be charitable in his dealings with Archibald Glen, about whom Carlyle said, "So intense, diseased a feeling of Self I have seen in no sane man" (CL 6:175). His advice to Mill here is especially interesting because it invokes biblical authority to influence Mill's behavior in a friendship under stress, and Carlyle wrote this advice to Mill slightly less than a year before tension began to surface between Mill and himself. It seems likely that Carlyle's counseling Mill here to be patient with a mutual friend manifests his early perception of potential conflict between himself and Mill. In fact, on June 13, 1833, Carlyle told Mill, "It is no secret to me that you and I differed over a whole half-universe of things," suggesting that he had already been aware for quite a while of the divergence of opinion between himself and Mill (CL 6:401). Although in this letter he attempted to calm Mill about their differences, his statement that he had fancied Mill and he were moving closer together rather than farther apart suggests that he was already concerned enough about the issue to have been thinking about it even before Mill brought it up. Carlyle also used the Bible to counsel Mill about how to live: "Walk *humbly* in well-doing; there is no other road for one" (CL 7:73). This advice appeared in a letter dated January 20, 1834, in which Carlyle told Mill to remain silent henceforth about their differences of opinion. It was not the last time Carlyle used a biblical allusion with Mill—allusions continue as long as his unspoken concern about Mill's religious beliefs persisted, but this allusion is his last effort to use the Bible to alleviate his anxiety about Mill by direct intervention.

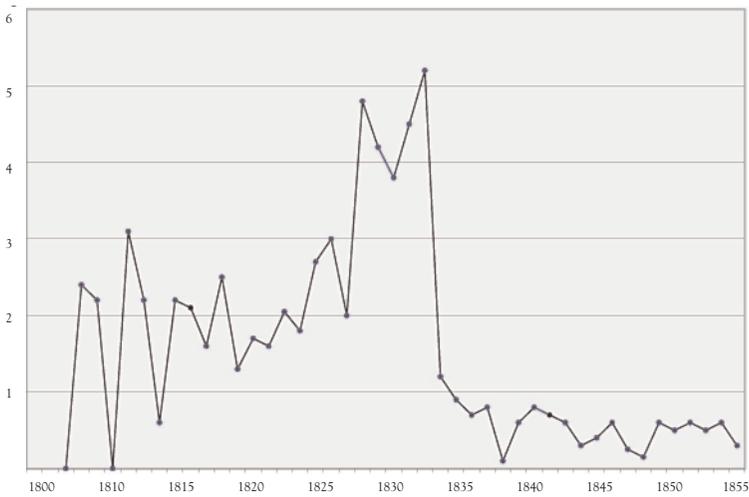
Carlyle also uses the Bible to comfort his correspondents. He employs it for this purpose most often in his letters to a friend he regarded deeply, Sterling. Of the biblical allusions in his letters to Sterling, 23 per-

cent offer comfort about death. On May 5, 1843, Carlyle invoked both of his favorite verses on death, 2 Samuel 12:23 and Ecclesiastes 12:5, to comfort Sterling about the death of a family member (CL 16:156). Both verses serve, as mentioned above, to recall the bereaved to an eternal perspective and alleviate anxiety about permanent separation. When Carlyle had to address the issue of death with Sterling again on Aug 27, 1844, it is Sterling's own death which loomed in the near future, and Carlyle reached for Job 13:15, a much more appropriate verse for the situation, to comfort his friend and alleviate his own anxieties (CL 18:193). His use of the Bible on these two occasions manifests his concern about a deeply loved friend, and his choice of verses demonstrates his sensitivity and great familiarity with Scripture.

V. ALLUSIONS OVER THE YEARS

On average, Carlyle uses three biblical allusions in every two letters he wrote, a 1.5 ratio of allusions to letters, but several times he deviates significantly from this norm.¹⁶ These deviations reveal much about the reasons Carlyle reaches for his Bible. His two most obvious departures from his norm are a peak ratio of 5.26 in 1835 and a precipitous drop to a 0.26 ratio in 1836. Further drops to 0.14 in 1837 and 0.10 in 1838 result in a virtual flat line after 1838 (see Figure 4). Other deviations of more than 1.04, the average deviation, from the average ratio of 1.50 are a peak of 4.87 in 1832 and high ratios of average ratio of 1.50 were a peak of 4.87 in 1832 and high ratios of 4.26 and 3.77 in 1833 and 1834, respectively (see Figure 5).¹⁷ Several

¹⁶Because Carlyle wrote more letters in some years than in others, looking at the raw number of biblical allusions in each year tells little. The ratio of allusions to letters written in each year is a more meaningful statistic. Also, in each year from 1812 to 1820 Carlyle wrote less than 1 percent of the total number of letters he wrote between 1812 and 1855; because so few letters were written in these years, counting these years as equal to other years in which Carlyle wrote many more letters weights these letters and their characteristics disproportionately. To take this problem into account, statistics have



correlates most consistently with the overall pattern is Carlyle's anxiety about stressful issues in his life.

Carlyle's heavy use of biblical allusions in 1832 was due primarily to

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
1813	0.00	1832	4.87	1845	0.26
1816	0.00	1833	4.26	1846	0.40
1817	3.06	1834	3.77		
		1835	5.26	1849	0.26
1829	2.63				

¹⁷Other deviations of more than 1.04 from the average were a high (3.06) in 1817 and isolated lows in 1813 (0.00), 1816 (0.00), 1845 (0.26), 1846 (0.40), 1849 (0.26), and 1855 (0.33). A low number of letters in 1813, 1816, and 1817 explains anomalous highs and lows in these years, while lows in 1845, 1846, 1849, and 1855 are harder to account for. Lows here not only represent greater than average variations from the overall 1813–1855 average ratio of 1.50, but they also vary more (0.32, 0.18, 0.32, and 0.25, respectively) than the average deviation (0.14) from the average ratio of 0.58 for 1836–1855; thus, these years are anomalies not only in the larger scheme but also among years after the big drop in 1836.

his anxiety over the death of his father on January 22, 1832 (Kaplan 189–91). James Carlyle's death represented a critical point in Carlyle's search for the authority necessary to write creatively in his own voice, and his anxiety over the event was significant enough to prompt him to write a memoir about his father (Vanden Bossche 33–39). Of his forty-two allusions to the Bible in 1832, thirteen deal directly with his father's death, and five more, such as allusions to encourage his mother to be cheerful and to admonish his brother to look to eternity, may also be linked indirectly to it, for a total of eighteen allusions traceable to Carlyle's concern over this event.¹⁸ Without allusions related to James Carlyle's death, the ratio of allusions to letters in 1832 would be only 2.72, a deviation of only 1.22 from the average (1.5), making Carlyle's attempt to deal with his father's death clearly the best explanation for his heavy use of biblical allusions in this year.

Carlyle's allusions to the Bible remained heavy in 1833 and 1834. His anxiety about authorship as a profession and about his potential for success was severe in these years and accounts for his reaching for Scripture. In nine of his thirty-three biblical allusions in 1833 and nine in 1834, he is either encouraging or admonishing himself to keep working or describing authorship to others.¹⁹ Without these allusions, the ratio of allusions to letters would be 2.76 in 1833 and 2.86 in 1834, representing deviations of only 1.26 and 1.367, respectively, from the average. Given these numbers, Carlyle's concern over his choice of career and success in that career is clearly the best explanation for his heavy use of biblical allusions in 1833 and 1834.

The highest ratio of allusions to letters in Carlyle's correspondence, 5.26, occurs in 1835 and represents a deviation of 3.76 from the average ratio of 1.50. The factor that offers the best explanation for his unprecedented use of biblical allusions in this year is his overwhelming anxiety about the loss of the manuscript of *The French Revolution* and his need to rewrite the entire first volume. Shifts in his use of biblical

¹⁸See CL (6:102, 104 [twice], 105, 111, 112 [four times], 116, 120 [twice], 144, 199, 207, 273, 277, and 285).

¹⁹See CL (6:320 [twice], 334, 345, 349, 427, and 445; 7:41, 73, 84, 224, 250,

allusions in his letters to Mill and to other key correspondents at the time of the disaster support this explanation. Despite silencing Mill on divisive issues on January 20, 1834, his anxiety over Mill's religious beliefs persisted, and he continued to use biblical allusions in his letters to his friend. Before the burning of the manuscript in early March 1835, Carlyle alluded to the Bible five times in three letters to Mill, a ratio of 1.67 allusions to letters. After the burning of the manuscript, however, he alluded to the Bible only twice in eleven letters to Mill in 1835, a ratio of 0.18 allusions to letters. He continued to correspond with his friend, but his fifteen letters to Mill in 1836 contained only one allusion to the Bible, and the fourteen letters of 1837 contained the same. His anxiety over the loss of the manuscript had caused a complete emotional cutoff between the friends.

Shifts in Carlyle's use of the Bible to his other key correspondents in 1835 complete the picture. Before the manuscript burned, Carlyle's allusions/letters ratios were 2.0 to Emerson, 0.00 to his mother, and 1.00 to John; after the burning, the ratios became 3.0 to Emerson, 0.78 to his mother, and 1.13 to John. When his use of the Bible in letters to Mill wanes, it waxes in others. In his letters to these other correspondents he does not use allusions in any significant degree to discuss the disaster itself or anything relating to authorship; however, this aspect of the pattern of allusions does not undermine the correlation between biblical allusions and his anxiety. The disaster was serious enough to cause complete and permanent emotional cutoff from Mill, to cause Carlyle to do something he had never done once embarked on a project—to lock his writing away in a drawer and abandon it completely for weeks and almost to keep him from speaking of the incident at all. In such extraordinary circumstances the use of biblical allusions to discuss the issue is hardly to be expected. Just as he ceases using the Bible with Mill, the center of the anxiety-producing event, and steps up his allusions to other correspondents, he does not apply the Bible to talk about the loss itself but to discuss the variety of other topics which fills his correspondence as he remained largely, tellingly silent on the one issue preoccupying his time and energy in the months after the catastrophe.²⁰

In 1836 Carlyle's biblical allusions dropped from 5.26 allusions per letter to 1.17, a tremendous plunge from a ratio 3.76 above the average to one 0.33 below it and representing only twenty-two percent of the 1835 ratio.²¹ In 1837 the ratio fell to only fourteen percent of the 1835 ratio, and in 1838 it fell further to only ten percent of the 1835 ratio. Overall, the ratio of allusions to letters dropped ninety percent from 1835 to 1838. Not only is this three-year decline particularly dramatic, but it also initiated a low that lasted until at least 1855. While eighty-three percent of ratios before 1836 (and ninety-three percent of ratios between 1820 and 1835) are above the 1.50 average, one hundred percent of ratios from 1836 to 1855 are below it (see Figure 6). This means not a single ratio after 1836 rises to the overall average for 1813–1855. In fact, while the average ratio of allusions to letters from 1813 to 1835 is 2.29, the average ratio from 1836 to 1855 is a measly 0.58. Even the three ratios between 1836 and 1855 (those in 1845, 1846, and 1855) that deviate more than 1.04 from the 1.50 average all deviate below that average, not above it.

Figure 6: Averages and Deviations from Averages

One might try to account for this sudden and seemingly permanent decline in Carlyle's use of the Bible by looking at his reading practices.

²⁰In a letter to Mill on October 30, 1835, Carlyle reported reading only the Bible and Buchez's *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française* (1834) and elaborated that “[o]f Bible I seem to get more and more understanding, deeper and deeper reverence. It is a book written by men who knew the thing they were writing” (CL 8:250). Carlyle's reading habits in 1835 might contribute to the high ratio of biblical allusions to letters in that year, but alone they are simply not sufficient to account for the tremendous spike in allusions.

²¹Description is the number one purpose for which Carlyle uses biblical allusions, but in 1836, the year of the precipitous drop, he did not use the Bible for description a single time. In that year he also did not use the Bible to encourage (his number two use) or admonish (his number three use). That Carlyle did not use the Bible for any of these top three purposes in the same year that he hardly used any allusions at all supports the notion that a single factor, such as anxiety, dictates both when he uses allusions and the purposes for which he uses them.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Avg. Ratio</u>	<u>% Above 1.5</u>	<u>% 1.4 or Below</u>
1813-1855	1.50	44% (19/43)	56% (24/43)
1813-1835	2.29	83% (19/23)	7% (4/23)
1821-1835	1.48	93% (14/15)	7% (1/15)

After *The French Revolution* appeared, Carlyle spent more time writing and less time reading and studying the Bible. Certainly, the volume of both his publications and his letters increased dramatically from 1837 onward. Also, although the letter to Mill mentioned above asserts that in 1835 Carlyle was reading the Bible, it also implies that what suffered when Carlyle wrote vigorously was his reading; if his time became even more limited as he gave himself to ever-larger projects, it is not unlikely that his reading even of the Bible diminished. If Carlyle did read his Bible less often, it would have been less fully and less frequently in the forefront of his mind, and this fact could surely have contributed to the decline in his biblical allusions after 1836.²²

Perhaps the best explanation for the diminution of Carlyle's biblical allusions after 1835, however, is simply the converse of the explanation for the high in allusions in 1835. By August 1835 he had rewritten the first volume of *The French Revolution*, overcoming per-

²²There is little direct evidence about Carlyle's Bible reading before 1835 and none after that date: in a letter to his mother on December 9, 1826, he reported reading sermons to his household weekly, but he did not mention the Bible itself (CL 4:165); on February 1, 1831, he reported to his mother that he read his Bible regularly (CL 5:227); on January 30, 1832, in a rare letter to James Carlyle, he advised his brother to do as he himself did, i.e., read regularly to his household from the Bible (CL 6:115); on August 28, 1832, he assured his mother that he read to the household from Genesis each Sabbath (CL 6:214); and on June 13, 1833, he recommended the Bible to Mill as a faithful depiction of spiritual warfare and as a source of guidance, but he did not affirm that he himself was reading it (CL 6:402). After 1835 Carlyle praised the Bible as "sacred and divine" (CL 9:380), expressed the wish that others might read it (CL 17:77), suggested it as a model for a collection of the classics (CL 24:24), contributed to a fund for distributing Bibles (CL 26:16), and praised it in several other ways, but never explicitly said he was reading it.

haps the worst challenge any author could face. By 1837 the book was published, and its success seemed to secure him a permanent place as an author. A glance at his use of the Bible in 1836 and 1837 bears out this explanation. In 1836 only one of his ten allusions to the Bible concerns authorship, and it does not indicate anxiety over his success, but the reverse: he uses the allusion to express his exasperation about an acquaintance's offering him a clerkship (CL 8:288). In 1837 he alluded to the Bible to describe a leaf of *The French Revolution* manuscript on which he was writing the letter, to encourage another author about the success of his book, to describe English reviews and magazines, and to ask for Mill's patience with his mood after finishing *The French Revolution* (CL 9:125, 373, 225, and 258). These purposes relate to authorship, yet they treat it lightly, especially the recent disaster. The pattern of allusions in these years suggests that the best explanation for the sharp decline in his use of biblical allusions in 1836 and the continued low levels thereafter is the resolution of the authorship drama that dominated his life until age forty. This aspect of the overall pattern also lends further support to the hypothesis that it is anxiety that motivates his allusions to the Bible.²³

Carlyle's use of the Bible indicates that he reached for Scripture when he was anxious—to deal with troubling issues and tense relationships. Employing Bible verses for description, he constructed these issues and relationships in ways that assuaged his concerns and justified

²³One might assume that a broadening of Carlyle's correspondence to include business partners and casual acquaintances caused a lower ratio of allusions to letters. This assumption does not hold up under scrutiny, however. Correspondents to whom he wrote letters with more than the average ratio of allusions comprise the same percentage (68 percent) of his correspondents in 1836 that they did in 1835. It is thus impossible to attribute the great drop in his use of biblical allusions from 1835 to 1836 to a broadening of his correspondence. Also, in 1837 high-allusion ratio correspondents continued to make up fifty-five percent of all his correspondents that year, and in 1838 they comprised forty-seven percent. Again, it is impossible to look to a change in the portion high-allusion correspondents formed in his total correspondence in 1837 and 1838 to explain adequately the 90 percent drop in the allusions/letters ratio over the 1835–38 period. In fact, the allusions/

his actions. He also used Scripture for encouragement, admonishment, counsel, and comfort, releasing anxiety by overt attempts to control the feelings, opinions, and behaviors of others. He alluded to the Bible most when his career success was most uncertain or when traumatic events, such as his father's death, generated anxiety. He favored genres and books of the Bible that alleviated anxiety most effectively by speaking convincingly to his intellect and his heart.

Although no one aspect alone dictates that Carlyle alluded to the Bible out of anxiety, the overall pattern leaves little room for other explanations. When he was anxious, he did as many do—he reached for the familiar. And for him, a reach for Scripture was not simply a reach for a book he knew well; it was also a reach for that ultimate familiar, home. It represented simultaneously the love, security, and faith of his godly mother and the wisdom and authority of his righteous father. Ultimately, he formed a relationship with the Bible that resembled his most meaningful personal relationships—familiar, yet intense and sometimes conflicted. In fact, with its “intense and entire *sincerity*” to match his own, the “Book of Books” may have been Carlyle's most abiding friend.

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letter ratio also drops significantly in 1836/1837 in letters to five of the six high-ratio correspondents to whom Carlyle wrote from at least the 1830s to

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