

# **THE BIBLE, THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY AND THE CHURCH**

By W.E. Read

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## Preface

In the chapters that follow under the general title of The Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Church no attempt is made to give a full and comprehensive coverage of the transcendent theme of God's revelation to mankind. Such a subject has so many aspects that it would be impossible in the limited space available to cover more than a few of the many phases of this theme.

This presentation confines itself to three of the ways God has chosen to make Himself known to men; namely, through the word of God, through the testimony of Jesus, and through the church of Christ.

In the Holy Scriptures we have Heaven's divine revelation that brings to men the knowledge of God and the sublime truths of salvation. In the testimony of Jesus we have the divine exhortation that directs our minds to the wonderful truths in the word of God. In the church of Christ we have the divine fellowship that God has designed should mean so much to us as the children of God in our communion with one another and in our fellowship with Him.

God's revelation through His word is emphasized thus:

"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 Timothy 3:16,17.

"Search the Scriptures, for they are the voice of God speaking to the soul."-Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 157.

God's revelation through the testimony of Jesus is emphasized thus:

"The mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Ephesians 3:4,5.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10.

"God has spoken to us through His word, He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church."-Ibid., p. 298.

God's revelation through the church of Christ is emphasized thus:

'And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Ephesians 3:9, 10.

"He purposed to give them [the nations] opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church.' - Christ's Object Lessons, p. 286.

"Through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world.' - Testimonies to Ministers, p. 50.

It is the earnest hope of the author that a careful and prayerful perusal of the pages that follow may confirm our confidence in the eternal word of God, that it may give us a deeper appreciation of the rich blessings provided for us in the Spirit of prophecy, and that it may lead us also to enjoy to a fuller degree the wonderful joys of fellowship in the church of Christ here below, in preparation for the infinite fullness of benedictions in the everlasting kingdom of our God.

# 1. The Holy Scriptures

The Bible, the name by which the word of God is commonly known, constitutes God's revelation to the hearts of men. Through it divine illumination comes to minds darkened by sin. In its pages man is permitted to behold the wondrous glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus our Lord. As he ponders the sacred messages of the word of God he will find that

"In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God. So far as it was of divine institution, the entire system of Judaism was a compacted prophecy of the gospel. To Christ 'give all the prophets witness.' From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven's glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the Star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice, Christ's death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt."-The Desire of Ages, pp. 211, 212.

## Names by Which the Scriptures Are Known

In the Divine Record various terms are used to designate the word of the Most High. It is called the Scripture or Scriptures at least sixty eight times, seventeen in the Old Testament and fifty one in the New.

The word scriptures means "writings," and so when we study the collection of divine messages, we are meditating upon the "divine writings"-letters from the Most High to the children of men. We might think of the Bible as a book in which God expresses His deep love for mankind. It certainly reveals His matchless love and compassion, especially in the gift of His only-begotten Son. Consequently it becomes God's love letter to the human race, perhaps one of the longest love letters ever written. Here God speaks to the sons of men in language of endearing affection. He not only loved but "so loved" (John 3:16) that He gave us His eternal Son, and He assures us over and over again that He loves us even though we have been sinful and disobedient.

Observe such expressions as the following:

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3.

"He loved them unto the end." John 13:1.

"God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

The divine revelation is known also as the "oracles of God." We read in Romans 3:2 of the "oracles of God" and in Acts 7:38 of "the lively oracles." This revelation from Heaven is called also the "word of God." This term is used in both the Old and the New Testament, and it comes to us in varying associations. For instance, in addition to the expression "word of God," this divine revelation is called "the word of the Lord" (Psalms 18:30), and "the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 5:24).

Furthermore, when the prophets describe the divine communication through them, they speak of it as "the word of the Lord came unto me, saying." There are many variants of this expression, as will be seen in the following:

"Thus says the Lord." 2 Samuel 7:8.

"As God hath said." 2 Corinthians 6:16.

"God spoke." Genesis 8:15.

"The Holy Ghost says." Hebrews 3:7.

"I the Lord have said." Ezekiel 21:17.

"The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke." Acts 1:16.

"The scripture says." James 4:5.

The word Bible is the term most frequently employed when referring to the Sacred Scriptures, but this is not a Biblical word. It comes from the Greek *biblia*, which means "books."

The Holy Bible-the Book-is a sacred collection of many books. However, the Bible is a complete whole, and so this is a correct term. It is referred to as "the book" in the Scripture itself. "In the volume of

the book it is written of me." Psalms 40:7; Hebrews 10:7.

Even though it is a book, thank God, it is the Book of books, and this has been well expressed, in the following lines:

"Of all the books that have flooded the world, be they ever so valuable, the Bible is the Book of books, and is most deserving of the closest study and attention."-Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 129.

## **Symbols Illustrating the Word of God**

In order to make the truth plain to the hearts and minds of men, God has chosen to use various figures, or symbols, by which to bring home more forcefully the truths He seeks to reveal to human hearts. The word of God is likened to:

Bread	John 6:48, 58
Chain	Early Writings, p. 221
Fire	Jeremiah 20:9
Fountain	Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 393
Gold	PSALMS 19:10
Hammer	Jeremiah 23:29
Honey	Psalms 119:103
Lamp	Psalms 119:105
Leaven	Christ's Object Lessons, p. 99
Light	Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 111, 406
Meat	Hebrews 5:12, 14
Milk	1 Peter 2:2
Mine	Testimonies to Ministers, p. 476
Mirror	James 1:23, 25
Pearls	Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 456
Rock	Mount of Blessing, pp. 213, 216
Seed	The Desire of Ages, p. 192
Silver	Psalms 12:6
Sword	Ephesians 6:17
Water	Ephesians 5:26

## **The Word of God Is Eternal**

The servants of God all through the ages have testified to the eternal nature of the word of God.

Everything in this world of sin is temporary; the things of time and sense are ephemeral. The things with which we have to do day by day will pass away, but the word of our God remains; this is eternal. Even the heavens and the earth may be dissolved, but "my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. Centuries ago the gospel prophet of the Old Testament declared: "The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Isaiah 40:8.

It is no wonder that millenniums ago the sweet singer of Israel penned these striking words: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." I's. 119:89. This is a wonderful thought. The word of God is safe and secure from every foe. No man, no evil angel, no enemy of the truth of God, whether it be an individual, a nation, or an ecclesiastical council, can ever tamper with it; it is in heaven; it is guarded by the stalwarts of the angelic hosts. There they encamp round about the throne of God, and His word is safe from all molestation. Some translations of this text instead of the word settled give endures, established, or stands firm. Truly the word of the Lord "endures forever." God's "word is as enduring as the everlasting hills." (The Great Controversy, p. 66.)

## **"The Lord Gave the Word"**

It should be observed that when the time came for the message of warning and entreaty to be given, God sent His messengers with the life-giving words from heaven. This is reiterated over and over again in the Sacred Record.

"The Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets!" Jeremiah 25:4.

"The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending." 2 Chronicles 36:15.

"Many years did thou forbear them, and testified against them by thy spirit in thy prophets!" Nehemiah 9:30.

The testimony through the prophet Zechariah is the same, for he writes concerning "the words which the Lord of hosts bath sent in his spirit by the former prophets!" Zechariah 7:12. Hence the word of God, the Holy Bible, the Scriptures of truth, constitutes a blessed gift from God to the human race. Here is the message of eternal love, the voice of entreaty, the plea to return to the Father's house and find hope and joy in accepting the rich offer of divine mercy and salvation.

## **The Spoken and the Written Word of God**

Not only was the divine word spoken by the prophets of old, it was also written. In this way the Heaven-sent revelations were preserved for succeeding generations.

We read in the Scripture of truth that the divine oracles were:

"Spoken . by Daniel the prophet!" Matthew 24:15.

"Spoken of the Lord by the prophet!" Matthew 1:22.

"Spoken... by the prophet Esaias!" Matthew 3:1.

"Spoken by Jeremy the prophet!" Matthew 27:9.

"Spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets!" Luke 1:70.

We read also that they were written:

"Things which are written may be fulfilled!" Luke 21:22.

"Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." John 1:45.

"It is written in the book of Psalms." Acts 1:20.

"That the scriptures [writings] of the prophets might be fulfilled." Matthew 26:56.

Concerning that which was written we do well to understand its value and its sacred character, for:

"The writing was the writing of God." Exodus 32:16.

"There came a writing ... from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the Lord." 2 Chronicles 21:12.

"Said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me." 1 Chronicles 28.19.

The emphasis upon the written as well as the spoken word of God is seen also in the way the apostle Paul uses the Old Testament Scriptures. Twice he uses the word "describes" in the book of Romans as under:

"Moses describes the righteousness." Romans 10:5.

"David ... describes the blessedness." Romans 4:6.

It is the same word in English, but there are two different words used in the Greek New Testament. In Romans 10:5 the word is grapho, "to write"; in Romans 4:6 it is lego, "to say, to tell."

So whether the divine revelation is spoken or written it is equally the word of the everlasting God. Dr. George T. Purves writes:

"Not only did Moses and the prophets speak from God, but the sacred Scriptures themselves were in some way composed under divine control. He not only affirms with Peter that, 'moved by the Holy Ghost men spoke from God,' but that 'the Scriptures themselves are inspired by God.' Paul plainly recognizes the human authorship of the books, and quotes Moses and David and Isaiah as speaking therein. But not only through them, but in these books of theirs did God also speak. Many readers notice the first part of Paul's statement, but not the second. God spoke 'through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures.'" - The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, January, 1893, p. 13.

We read also:

"The book is thus rightly said to be inspired no less than the prophet. The book reflects and perpetuates the personal characteristics of the prophet, but it does not create them. Writing introduces no limitation into the representation of truth which does not already exist in the first conception and expression of it."-BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels (Boston, 1862), P. 15.

## **What Is Included in the Word of God?**

Let us consider the word as it applies to the written Scriptures of divine revelation. It seems quite evident from the Holy Scriptures themselves that the books of the Old Testament were recognized as "holy scriptures." This is expressed not only by the apostles but by the Savior Himself. Paul in his counsel to Timothy makes reference to the fact-

"that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15.

This reference to the Scriptures referred at that time only to the writings of the Old Testament, for the books of the New Testament were not then compiled. The same testimony is borne by Peter when he declared that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Peter 1:20. Here again it is evident that reference is made to the Old Testament writings. Furthermore, we find the Master Himself, when talking to the disciples on that memorable journey to Emmaus, pointing them to the Old Testament Scriptures to show that He was the Christ of God, the promised Messiah. Note carefully His words:

"Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." 'And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:27, 44.

It will be observed that in verse 27 the Savior calls attention to "Moses and all the prophets"; but in verse 44 He refers to the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms. Here reference is made to the three parts of the Hebrew writings, or Holy Scriptures. These were arranged in three sections, the Pentateuch, comprising the five books of Moses; the prophets, which included the major and minor prophets of ancient days; and the Hagiographa-the holy writings, which embraced not only the collection of 150 psalms but also such books as Proverbs and others. In the Savior's words to the astonished disciples during that eventful walk, Jesus not only endorsed the revelation of God through His servants the prophets but also gave clear endorsement for calling these revelations by the term "scriptures."

The New Testament writings, also coming through the prophets of the early church, came to be recognized as divine revelations from God to man. This conviction developed very early in the history of the apostolic church; it came in part during the lifetime of the apostles themselves. This was evidently so in the case of the letters of the apostle Paul, for Peter, one of his colleagues, declared on one occasion:

"Our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things. In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

These texts reveal that Peter-and he undoubtedly represents other of the apostles and many believers of that day-recognized not only the Old Testament writings but also the epistles of the apostle Paul as "scriptures." So far as the apostle to the Gentiles is concerned, this can be seen also in his words in 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; and the apostle Peter also recognized that his words as well as those of the other members of the apostolic band had divine authority. (1 Peter 1:12.) Hence, the conviction concerning the writings of the apostles, at least those that were chosen to be part of the New Testament as "scriptures of truth," was formed quite early, in fact, while the apostles were still active in their ministry for God.

Some of the earliest writings extant, outside the Bible, that give the history of the church after the days of the apostles, were known as the writings of the early church fathers. Although we would not quote these church fathers to any extent in matters of faith and doctrine, it is clear from their writings that they recognized the New Testament gospels as well as the epistles and the book of Revelation as "Holy Writings" or "Holy Scriptures."

From an excellent authority we quote:

"The . . . testimonies of the apostolic fathers, we may remark, without any professed intention to

ascertain the canon of the New Testament, they 'have most effectually ascertained it, by their quotations from the several books which it contains, or by their explicit references to them, as the authentic Scriptures received and relied on as inspired oracles, by the whole Christian church. . . . There is scarcely a book of the New Testament, which one or other of the apostolical fathers has not either quoted or referred to. . . . They uniformly quote and allude to them, with the respect and reverence due to inspired writings: and they describe them as "Scriptures," as "Sacred Scriptures," and as "the Oracles of the Lord." There is indeed good reason to conclude, not only from the multiplicity of references, but from the language employed by the apostolical fathers in making their quotations, that the books of the New Testament were not only generally received, and in common use in the Christian churches, but that at least the greater part of them had been collected and circulated in one volume before the end of the first, or in the very beginning of the second century.' "-THOMAS HARTWELLHORNE, An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (1839), vol. 1, pp. 81, 82.

Note also the following:

"In the letters written by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, as he journeyed to his martyrdom in Rome in AD. 115, there are pretty certain quotations from Matthew, John, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and possible allusions to Mark, Luke, Acts, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. His younger contemporary Polycarp in a letter to the Philippians quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 1 John. And so we might go on through the writers of the second century, amassing increasing evidence of their familiarity with and recognition of the authority of the New Testament writings. So far as the Apostolic Fathers are concerned, the evidence is collected and weighed in a work called The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, recording the findings of a committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology in 1905.' - F.F. BRUCE, Are the New Testament Documents Reliable? pp. 18, 19.

## **Relation of Old Testament to Words of Jesus**

There was an intimate relationship between the Old Testament writings and the words of Christ Jesus our Lord. He puts His words on the same basis and as of equal authority and value with the words of divine revelation through the prophets of old, as will be seen in such passages as the following:

"Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust. For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?" Verses 45-47.

In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul, referring to the Scripture, quotes, "The laborer is worthy of his reward." But where is this scripture? Evidently not in the Old Testament. But it is in the New and in the words of the Master as recorded in Matthew 10:10, where it reads, "The workman is worthy of his meat."

In the light of these references we conclude that not only God's revelation through His prophets of old constituted the "holy Scriptures," but also the words of Christ Jesus our Lord, the teachings and counsels of His apostles, and the records we find in the Gospels, the epistles, and the Apocalypse, are all worthy of a place in "the volume of the book," and are to be recognized and accepted as sacred writings-God's message to the hearts of men today.

We must remember also that the two Testaments, the Old and the New, are interwoven; they cannot be separated. One cannot be understood without the other. Each Testament is a lexicon-a glossary, a commentary-for the other. It has been well said:

The New is the gospel unfolded-the Old is the gospel enfolded.  
The New is the gospel unveiled-the Old is the gospel veiled.  
The New is in the Old concealed-the Old is by the New revealed.  
The New is in the Old contained-the Old is by the New explained.  
The Old is the gospel confined-the New is the gospel defined.  
The Old is the gospel enclosed-the New is the gospel disclosed.

In the Spirit of prophecy we read:

"The word of God includes the Scriptures of the Old Testament as well as of the New. One is not complete without the other." -Christ's Object Lessons, p. 126.

"In rejecting the Old, they [those who set aside the Old Testament] virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. . . . The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ." - Ibid., p. 128.

## The Source of the Divine Writings

The use of the possessive in the expression "word of God" indicates very clearly the source of the oracles of God. If it is His word, it comes from God. It emanates from Him; He speaks the word; it proceeds from His thought and is uttered by Him. We read of "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4.

## The Testimony of the Prophets Themselves

All through the ages the prophets of the Most High have unhesitatingly declared that the word they gave to the people of their day came from the Lord. We will observe some of the expressions they used to convey this thought to men:

"Says the Lord": Jeremiah 8:1; Amos 2:11; Nahum 2:13; Zephaniah 3:8; Jonah 4:10.

"The Lord says": Micah 6:1.

"The Lord answered me, and said": Hab. 2:2.

"Thus says the Lord": Obadiah 1:1; 2 Samuel 7:8; Joshua 7:13; Jeremiah 13:1; Zechariah 11:4.

"The word of the Lord that came": Hosea 1:2; Joel 1:1.

"The word of the Lord . . . came unto me, saying": Ezekiel 12:1. "The word that came . . . from the Lord, saying": Jeremiah 30:1. "The Lord said unto me": Isaiah 8:1.

"His word": 2 Chronicles 10:15; Lam. 2:17.

"What hath the Lord spoken?" Numbers 23:17.

"The word of God": 1 Samuel 9:27.

"The scripture of truth": Daniel 10:21.

The testimony of the New Testament writers to the messages of ancient days:

Of Genesis	"God spoke."	Acts 7:6 Genesis 15:13-16
Of Exodus	"The Holy Ghost this signifying."	Hebrews 9:8 Exodus 30:10
Of Leviticus	"Word of God."	Mark 7:10-13 Lev. 20:9
Of Deuteronomy	"Says the Lord."	Hebrews 10:30 Deuteronomy 32:35, 36
Of 1 Kings	"Answer of God." 1 Kings 19:10, 18	Romans 11:4
Of 1 Chronicles	"He hath said."	Hebrews 13:5 1 Chronicles 28:20
Of Psalms	"The Holy Ghost says."	Hebrews 3:7 Psalms 95:7
Of Isaiah	"As God hath said."	2 Corinthians 6:16 Isaiah 52:11

Let us notice also some of the testimonies of the prophets as to how they received the divine revelation:

"The Lord spoke."

Exodus 6:10.

"Hear the word of the Lord."

Isaiah 1:10.

"I have put my words into thy mouth."

Jeremiah 1:9.

"The spirit of the Lord spoke by me."

2 Samuel 23:2.

"The word of the Lord by Jeremiah."

2 Chronicles 36:21, 22.

"Thus says the Lord." Ezekiel 2:4.  
"The word of the Lord came." Jonah 3:6.  
"The burden of the word of the Lord." Zechariah 9:1; Malachi 1:1.  
"Hear you the word which the Lord speaks." Jeremiah 10:1.

"The Lord spoke unto Moses."  
This or its equivalent is found over fifty times in the book of Leviticus alone.  
"The word of the Lord came."  
This or an equivalent is used in Jeremiah, over one hundred times; Ezekiel, over sixty times; Amos, over fifty times.

We would re-emphasize the fact that the New Testament writers endorsed the sacred origin of the Old Testament Scriptures. This can be seen all through the New Testament narrative.

Acts 1:16 "Holy Ghost by the mouth of David."  
Acts 3:18 "God . . . showed by the mouth of all his prophets."  
Acts 10:43 "To him give all the prophets witness."  
Acts 13:40 "Spoken of in the prophets."

See also: Acts 7:42; 13:27; 15:15; 18:28; 24:14; 28:23; Romans 1:2; 3:21; 43; 9:17; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 11:32; James 2:8, 23; 4:5; 1 Peter 2:6; Revelation 16:6; 22:9.

The New Testament, however, puts its stamp of approval not merely on one part of the Old Testament Scriptures but:

#### **On the Law**

"The law of the Lord." Luke 2:39.  
"The law of Moses." Luke 2:22.  
See also Matthew 12:5 and Mark 10:3.

#### **On the Prophets**

"God ... showed by the mouth of all his prophets." Acts 3:18, 2 1.  
"His prophets." Romans 1:2.  
See also Ephesians 2:20; James 5:10; Hebrews 1:1.

#### **On the Psalms (Holy Writings)**

Acts 13:35; Luke 24:44; Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16.

#### **On Other Books**

Matthew 24:15; Romans 10:5; 11:1,3,4.

A noteworthy fact is that each succeeding generation of prophets, as well as leaders in the church of God, accepted the divine revelation that came through the prophets who preceded them. The following references show the recognition and endorsement of:

#### **The Writings of Moses**

By Joshua-Deuteronomy 31:24; Joshua 23:6.  
By David-1 Kings 2:1-3.  
By Hilkiah and Josiah-2 Kings 22:8-13.  
By Daniel-Daniel 9:10,11.  
By Ezra-Ezra 7:6,10.  
By Nehemiah-Nehemiah 8:1-18; 9:3.  
By Malachi-Malachi 4:4.

### **The Writings of the Prophets**

By Daniel (of Jeremiah)-Daniel 1:1, 2.

By Nehemiah (of prophets)-Nehemiah 9:26-29.

### **The Writings of David**

By Nehemiah (Psalms)-Nehemiah 12:36-46.

The Old Testament-Luke 24:25, 27: 44.

Coming more directly to the thought of the "holy oracles" being the revealed will of God to man, we might notice how the divine illumination came to the prophets. We read that all Scripture is inspired of God. (2 Timothy 3:16.) This text is the only place in the New Testament where the Greek word for "inspiration" is used and so rendered. The word literally rendered is "God breathed" and is so translated by Rotherham in his Emphasized Translation of the New Testament. It means that God took possession of the human instrument and Himself breathed through him the words of life, of counsel, and of warning. In a special sense it was the voice of God.

Another step in this possession of the prophets of God is indicated by the apostle Peter in his epistle:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

Here it will be noted that the Holy Spirit is the motivating power. It is the Spirit of God that moves, directs, impels His servants the prophets. This was recognized not only in New Testament days but in the days long before that. We find even David makes this acknowledgment: "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Samuel 23:2.

But the Spirit of God "moved" the prophets. This is a word of wonderful significance. Literally, it means to be "borne along," "carried along," "impelled" or "driven." Weymouth uses "impelled," and in Acts 27:15, 17 we read of the ship in which the apostle Paul sailed as being "driven" by the storm. This is the same word.

It is important that we remember that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," as we have it in the Authorized Version.

Many of the translations in English, such as the Interlinear, Montgomery, Rotherham, Ford, Revised Standard, Goodspeed, Weymouth, Knox (RC), Moffatt, and VerkuyI, render it this way.

One more thing might be observed when considering this important statement from the apostle's letter to Timothy, and that is the word all. It is not without reason that the Greek word pas ("all") is used in this instance. This word is rendered by several different words in the New Testament, and the following are worthy of thoughtful study:

In Matthew 18:19 it is rendered "any."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 it is rendered "every thing."

In Mark 7:18 it is rendered "whatsoever thing."

In Hebrews 4:15 it is rendered "all points."

It would be well also to observe that when Jesus referred to the prophecies concerning His work and mission, He used the same word "all" on several occasions. To the disciples on the road to Emmaus He told them -all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25, 27, 44.) On other occasions He mentioned "all things which are written" (Luke 21:22), "Till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). Peter stressed the same thought, "By the mouth of all his prophets" (Acts 3:18, 21); "to him give all the prophets witness" (Acts 10:43). So also did the apostle Paul in his great defense before Felix, where he declared he believed "all things which are written" (Acts 24:14).

Hence the word in 2 Timothy 3:16 is all-inclusive, and we do well to recognize the force of its meaning. The fact is that not a part, not certain sections of the Bible, not the testimony of one person here and there, is inspired, but all Scripture is God breathed. All of it is inspired of God and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

B. B. Warfield has ably written:

"Scripture is thought of as the living voice of God speaking in all its parts directly to the reader. . . . Its authority rests on its divinity and its divinity expresses itself in its trustworthiness; and the New

Testament writers in all their use of it treat it as what they declare it to be-a God-breathed document, which, because Godbreathed, as through and through trustworthy in all its assertions, authoritative in all its declarations, and down to its last particular, the very word of God, His 'oracles.' "-Revelation and Inspiration, pp. 94-96.

The Spirit of prophecy comment is:

"The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God'; yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God. Those who pronounce upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, accepting some portions as divine while they reject other parts as human, overlook the fact that Christ, the divine, partook of our human nature, that he might reach humanity. In the work of God for man's redemption, divinity and humanity are combined. There are many passages of Scripture which skeptical critics have declared to be uninspired, but which, in their tender adaptation to the needs of men, are God's own messages of comfort to His trusting children."--Testimonies, vol. 5, pp.747,748.

### **The Veracity of the Biblical Manuscripts**

Quite often one hears of severe criticisms of the original manuscripts from which our Bible has been translated, Some claim that in the many copyings of the text through the years, mistakes are bound to have crept in, and that with the passing of the centuries it has become very doubtful whether we can be certain that we have a correct translation, and be sure that we have the actual word of God. It is true, of course, that there was always the danger of slight mistakes occurring in the copying of manuscripts. It should be remembered that the Hebrew language in its early written form was entirely written in consonants, no vowels at all being used. Furthermore, there were no spaces dividing one word from the other. It would look much the same as if we should write John 3:16 thus:

FRGDSLVDTHWRLDTHTHGVHSNLYBGTTNSN THTWHSVRBLVT1-INI-IMSHLDNTPRSHIITHV  
VRLSTNGLF.

If a piece of writing of this kind were given to any of us, we should certainly experience considerable difficulty in knowing which vowels to use and also how to separate the various words one from another. It was not until the Jews returned from the captivity in Babylon that the Hebrew words were divided from one another and the Hebrew Old Testament arranged into paragraphs and verses. At this time the square Hebrew characters were substituted for the old Phoenician or archaic Hebrew alphabet. Such changes as were made were introduced gradually and covered quite a period of time. Dr. Ginsburg, a Christian Jew from Poland, who became an eminent Hebrew scholar, asserts that this work was begun in the days of Ezra by men known as the Sopherim, or scribes. Several centuries passed, it seems, before any further major changes were introduced. Vowel points came in about AD. 500 to 600, and were the work of men known as the Masorettes.

It should be remembered also that many of the Hebrew letters differed from others in a very small minor point. Even in the printed text such differences are not too easily discerned; how much more difficult to observe in handwritten copies! The following characters will illustrate this.

r could easily be mistaken for dh  
h could easily be mistaken for h  
t could easily be mistaken for s  
w could easily be mistaken for z  
b could easily be mistaken for n

In view of these considerations, it seems nothing short of a miracle that the various manuscripts have come down to us in such wonderfully correct form as we have them today.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that extreme care was taken by the copyists of the Sacred Word. Carefully observe the following:

"In making copies of Hebrew manuscripts which are the precious heritage of the church to-day,

the Jewish scribes exercised the greatest possible care, even to the point of superstition. Counting, not only the words, but every letter, noting how many times each particular letter occurred, and destroying at once the sheet on which a mistake was detected, in their anxiety to avoid the introduction of the least error into the sacred Scriptures, which they prized so highly and held in such reverent awe. Moreover, each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript, written with a special kind of ink, upon sheets made from the skin of a "clean" animal. The writers also had to pronounce aloud each word before writing it, and on no account was a single word to be written from memory. They were to reverently wipe their pen before writing the name of God in any form, and to wash their whole body before writing "Jehovah," lest that holy name should be tainted even in the writing. The new copy was then carefully examined with the original almost immediately: and it is said that if only one incorrect letter were discovered the whole copy was rejected!"-SIDNEY COLLETT, *The Scripture of Truth*, pp. 14, 15.

As to voluminous copying of the manuscript in ancient days, note:

"Yet in all these voluminous sacred documents, which have been copied times without number, the highest authorities assure us that, in regard to the New Testament, the variations of any importance introduced by copyists amount to less than one-thousandth of the entire text. While the Hebrew documents of the Old Testament show even less variation still! ...

"Having, however, in the good providence of God, so many manuscripts to consult, the reader will understand that a copyist's mistake in one is, as a rule, easily detected by the correct reading of the same passage in many of the other documents. So that it may be safely said, with the possession of these thousands of manuscripts, although they are only copies, we are practically able to arrive at the exact words of the Scriptures, as they originally came from God through His prophets and apostles.' - *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

Further, from Thomas H. Horne:

"The manuscripts of the New Testament, which are extant, are far more numerous than those of any single classic -author whomsoever: upwards of three hundred and fifty were collated by Griesbach, for his celebrated critical edition. These manuscripts, it is true, are not all entire; most of them contain only the Gospels; others, the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles; and a few contain the Apocalypse or Revelation of John. But they were all written in very different and distant parts of the world. Several of them are upwards of twelve hundred years old, and give us the books of the New Testament, in all essential points, perfectly accordant with each other, as any person may readily ascertain by examining the critical editions published by Mill, Kuster, Bengel, Wetstein, and Griesbach. The thirty thousand various readings, which are said to be found in the manuscripts collated by Dr. Mill, and the hundred and fifty thousand which Griesbach's edition is said to contain, in no degree whatever affect the general credit and integrity of the text....

"The general uniformity, therefore, of the manuscripts of the New Testament, which are dispersed through all the countries in the known world, and in so great a variety of languages, is truly astonishing. And demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures have uniformly been held, and the singular care which was taken in transcribing them. And so far are the various readings contained in these manuscripts from being hostile to the uncorrupted preservation of the books of the New Testament, (as some sceptics have boldly affirmed, and some timid Christians have apprehended,) that they afford us, on the contrary, an additional and most convincing proof that they exist at present, in all essential points, precisely the same as they were when they left the hands of their authors.' - *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 1, pp. 106,107.

## **Purpose of the Divine Revelation**

This aspect of the question can be dealt with but briefly, but God has a divine purpose in giving to His church this wonderful revelation of His will. Had sin never entered His fair domain, the Bible as we know it would never have been necessary. But sin came, and with it all the weakness and tragedy of the human race. Iniquity has blinded the minds of men; their perceptions of right and wrong have been warped, and, unaided by the Spirit of God, men cannot discern between good and evil. But, thank God, in His mercy and loving-kindness the Lord sent messages of warning and entreaty to the hearts of men. These we find incorporated in the writings of the Holy Bible, God's blessed gift to all mankind. If we ask why this word was given, we find a fairly complete answer in Paul's letter to Timothy, his own son in the faith. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

The statements in this passage of Scripture indicate God's divine purpose in the gift of His Holy Word, and it is evident that the dealings of God with His people in past generations are meant as a warning and a guide to us today. We read:

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

We might profitably meditate also on the following important counsel from the Spirit of prophecy:

"Wonderful possibilities are open to those who lay hold of the divine assurances of God's word. There are glorious truths to come before the people of God. Privileges and duties which they do not even suspect to be in the Bible will be laid open before them. As they follow on in the path of humble obedience, doing His will, they will know more and more of the oracles of God.

"Let the student take the Bible as his guide and stand like a rock for principle, and he may aspire to any height of attainment." - Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 322, 323.

"The truths of the Bible, received, will uplift the mind from its earthliness and debasement. If the word of God were appreciated as it should be, both young and old would possess an inward rectitude, a strength of principle, that would enable them to resist temptation." -Ibid., p. 319.

## 2. Christ and the Holy Scriptures

One cannot read the New Testament without a conviction that our Lord and Master had a high regard and a deep reverence for the word of God. It was on His lips continually; He referred to it at all times. It was the basis of all His teachings; He sought in every way to remove the traditional emphasis that had been placed upon it by the Pharisees of His day.

It has been said that in the New Testament there are about 280 quotations from the Old Testament and more than 350 allusions to the Sacred Writings. These quotations come from twenty five of the Old Testament books, and if we include the allusions, then references come from thirty-three of the books of the Sacred Writings. This means that thirty-three of the thirty-nine books are referred to in one way or another. These Old Testament references are represented in seventeen out of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. We are told that Jesus Himself quoted from no less than twenty-four of the Old Testament books, and that among them were quotations from or allusions to the five books of Moses, the book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the book of Daniel. Those who have carefully classified these references assure us that there are

66 references from the five books of Moses  
36 references from the collection of the Psalms  
40 references from the prophecy of Isaiah  
22 references from the book of Daniel

### The Sacred Writings

The Scriptures the Savior used were what we know as the Old Testament. Jesus referred to the complete Holy Scriptures of His day when He mentioned Luke 24:44, "In the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." This was the threefold division of the Scriptures. On consulting the Jewish Bible in current use, one can see this same division and notice also the various books that entered into each division. They are as follows:

#### The Law (Pentateuch)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

#### The Prophets (Major and Minor)

Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

#### The Writings (Hagiographa)

Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles.

### Jesus Endorsed the "Scripture of Truth"

Christ our Lord endorsed these Holy Writings. He did this:

#### 1. For the Scriptures as a whole.

"You do err, not knowing the scriptures." Matthew 22:29.

"The scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"How are the Scriptures to be fulfilled which declare that thus it must be." Matthew 26:54, Weymouth.

#### 2. For the five books of Moses.

"Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me." John 5:46.

"Have you not read in the book of Moses?" Mark 12:26.

"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Luke 16:29.

#### 3. For the writings of the prophets.

"That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Matthew 26:56.

"Slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Luke 24:25.

"All things that are written by the prophets." Luke 18:31.

#### **4. For the Holy Writings (Psalms, etc.)**

"In the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." Luke 24:44.

"David himself says in the book of Psalms." Luke 20:42.

"Spoken of by Daniel the prophet." Matthew 24:15.

The expression "It is written" is used to introduce about eighty quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament, and the Savior made use of this term quite frequently in His reference to the Sacred Writings.

#### **Reference to Incidents**

In addition to the regular quotations made by Jesus during the period of His ministry, He referred, in His teaching, to many of the incidents recorded in the ancient books. In addition to other things He referred to the following:

The creation of man	The brazen serpent
The institution of marriage	The manna in the wilderness
Divorce	Giving of the Ten Commandments
The history of Noah	The tribute money
The Flood	The purification of lepers
Sodom and Gomorrah	David and the show bread
The story of Abraham	Solomon
Lot's wife	The Queen of Sheba
Moses and the bush	The widow of Sarepta
Circumcision	Jonah and the whale

#### **Real Historical Characters**

Jesus, in His complete and wholehearted acceptance of the ancient Scriptures, certainly regarded the historical characters as real men and not mere personified ideals or mythological heroes. When He referred to the patriarchs He spoke of them as men who played their part in the things of life and in the work of God. He would never have said to the Jewish leaders of His day, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: . . . and was glad," if Abraham had been unreal, connected with a folklore or mythology of those ancient times. He would never have said that Moses "Wrote of me" (John 5:46) if Moses had not written the books assigned to him; neither would He have spoken of David when David called Him Lord (Matthew 22:45) if the Psalms had not been written by the sweet singer of Israel.

#### **Jesus the Messiah**

Many are the names and titles given to 'the Son of God. Attention is here called to one expression of a general character that seems to have been in the thinking of the people in Christ's day. So many of the prophecies had pointed forward to the Messiah that the people had become used to speaking of Him as "the Coming One." We find this expression in The Desire of Ages, page 236. One thing among others that undoubtedly led to that conviction was the prophecy given by Moses centuries before, that God would raise up a prophet like unto him. Hence the people came to speak in a general way of the One who should come.

This thought can be observed in several places in the Gospels.' We read that John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the query, "Art thou he that should come?" Matthew 11:3. Reference is made to "that prophet that should come into the world" twice in the book of John. (6:14; 11:27.) The expression "that prophet" was used quite frequently. (John 1:21, 25.) Another prophecy which reads, 'Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord' (Psalms 118:26), certainly found its fulfillment in Christ Jesus our Lord. On two different occasions these words were applied to Him—once when the people spread palm branches before Him on His way to Jerusalem (Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38), and again when Christ uttered His pronouncement of doom upon the Holy City (Luke 13:35).

Many of the leaders of the people would also remember that the Messiah was spoken of as the star that "shall come . . . out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17), and also the words of Jacob in the blessing pronounced upon one of his sons, "until Shiloh come" (Genesis 49:10).

In all these references one observes the thought of "the Coming One"—either "that prophet that

should come" or He that should come "in the name of the Lord." It was not surprising, therefore, that the people in their understanding of the prophetic portions of the Holy Scriptures should speak thus of the Messiah.

## **The Messiah**

This thought of "the Coming One" found expression in another term-the Messiah. This word occurs twice in the Old Testament, Daniel 9:25, 26; and twice in the New Testament, John 1:41; 4:25. The Hebrew word rendered "Messiah" in Daniel's prophecy is used thirty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible. Thirty seven times it is translated "anointed," but twice, as already mentioned, it is translated "Messiah."

The word Messiah means priest-king. He is "Messiah the prince"-the "Prince of princes." He is the "priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:13) ; he is the "King [that] comes unto thee" (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5). Yes, He is Melchizedek, which also means the priest-king, the "King of righteousness," "the king of peace" (Hebrews 7:2).

Jesus Himself on several occasions claimed to be the Messiah. To the woman at the well of Samaria, who talked to Him of Messiah, He declared, 'I that speak unto thee am he.' John 4:26. When confronted with the challenge of the high priest who demanded, "Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus replied, "Thou has said," (Matthew 26:63, 64); 'I am' (Mark 14:62).

## **His Relationship to the Father**

Jesus was deeply conscious of His intimate relationship with His Father, and this is emphasized quite forcefully in the Gospel of John. The Savior knew He was the Messiah, and, as occasion offered, He revealed the sacredness and the vital importance of the mission entrusted to Him. Some of these expressions recorded in the fourth Gospel might be observed:

"As the Father raises up the dead. . . so the Son quickens whom he will." John 5:21.

"As they honor the Father" "all men should honor the Son." Verse 23.

"What things so ever he does, these also does the Son likewise." Verse 19.

"As the Father bath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Verse 26.

## **The Suffering Messiah**

The emphasis of Jesus upon the divine character of the Holy Oracles is seen more clearly, perhaps, than anywhere else, in that post resurrection walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus, when He accompanied the two sorrowful and disappointed disciples. Then, as already observed, He not only put His seal of endorsement upon the three divisions of the Hebrew writings-the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings-but referred more particularly to prophecies that had been fulfilled in His death and resurrection. Let us get the picture before us, and note particularly the words He uttered to these bewildered disciples:

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. . . . And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

"All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:25-27, 44.

What a thrilling experience this must have been! What joy must have filled the hearts of these disciples, for we read:

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Verses 45, 46.

One cannot help wondering what prophecies and incidents in the Old Testament Jesus brought to their attention. On this Luke's narrative is silent. However, one may well imagine some of the many prophecies to which He referred. Jesus had before Him the whole range of the divine revelation, all the way from the first promise of the gospel in Eden (Genesis 3:15) at the time of the fall of man down to the promise of the forerunner of the Messiah, namely, John the Baptist (Malachi 3:1-3), who prepared the way of the Lord.

An excellent and very comprehensive list of references concerning Christ, His sufferings, and death can be seen in the Pulpit Commentary, in notes on Luke 24. Among the references listed are the following:

The promise to Eve	Genesis 3:15;
The promise to Abraham	Genesis 22:18;
The paschal lamb	Exodus 12;
The brazen serpent	Numbers 21:9;
The greater Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15;
The star and scepter	Numbers 24:17;
The smitten rock	Numbers 20:11, 1 Corinthians 10:4.
Emmanuel	Isaiah 7:14;
Unto us a child is born	Isaiah 9:6, 7;
The good Shepherd	Isaiah 40:10,11;
The meek Sufferer	Isaiah 50:6;
He who bore our griefs	Isaiah 53:4, 5;
The Branch	Jeremiah 23:5; 33:14, 15;
The Heir of David	Ezekiel 34:23;
The Ruler from Bethlehem	Micah 5:2;
The lowly King	Zechariah 90;
The pierced Victim	Zechariah 12:10;
The smitten Shepherd	Zechariah 13:7;
The Messenger of the covenant	Malachi 3:1;
The Sun of Righteousness	Mal 3:1;

Besides the references to several psalms, notably the sixteenth and the twenty-second.

The relation of Jesus to the Scriptures of the Old Testament has been well expressed in the Spirit of prophecy:

"Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted." - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 253.

Truly our Lord and Master held the "scriptures of the prophets" as of the highest authority; He reckoned them to be in deed and in truth the word of the everlasting God.

### **The Witness of the Scriptures to Christ**

Having considered Christ's endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures, let us now give study to the witness of the ancient writings to Him. Many are the references in the Gospels and also the book of Acts.

The apostle Paul, when bearing his testimony before King Agrippa, said:

"I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Acts 26:22,23.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, called David as a witness for Christ the Lord:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 2:30-32.

Philip, after reviewing the evidences in the Sacred Writings, bore his testimony to Nathanael in the following words:

"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" John 1:45.

The apostle Peter, an energetic and faithful servant of God, bore his witness to Christ on many occasions.

At the time of his discourse outside the gate of the Temple he declared:

"But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Acts 3:18.

Still later we find him in the house of Cornelius preaching the Jesus who died and who rose from the dead, and then telling his hearers:

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43.

Then, as we have already seen, we have the witness of Christ Jesus Himself. Observe the following quotations from the Spirit of prophecy:

"In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God. . . . To Christ 'give all the prophets witness.' "-The Desire of Ages, p. 211.

"The Savior is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. It is the light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty.' - Ibid., p. 799.

This witness from the prophets of old is seen in many important aspects of the life and ministry of the Son of God. Let us seek to gather from the writings of old some of the testimonies borne by the seers of ancient days.

### **1. Related to the First Advent of Christ.**

The first promise concerning the Savior of mankind is found in Genesis 3:15, which reads as follows:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Thus in the early days of earth's history, we behold in outline the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Here is enmity between the great archenemy and the church of God; here is foretold the conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. Here is the prophecy that Satan will bruise the heel of the Savior; but, thank God, here is also the forecast that the Christ "shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The great controversy will end in triumph for the kingdom of righteousness, for Satan and all his hosts will ultimately be eliminated, and the powers of evil go down forever in the darkness of the shadow of death.

It seems evident from this prophecy given in the Garden of Eden that the Redeemer was to come as the promised seed. The divine pledge concerning this is referred to several times in the New Testament records. In each case it has its application to Christ the Lord. (See Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; Galatians 3:16; Revelation 12:17.)

The promise of the Coming Seed was repeated over and over again to the patriarchs and others. It was given to Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:25), it was renewed to Isaac (Genesis 26:4), and it was confirmed to Jacob (Genesis 28:14). Notice should be taken, however, of the stress laid by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Galatia upon the word "seed" and not "seeds." The promise of the Lord was made not to "seeds" but to the "seed." The word given to Eve mentions her "seed." The word given to Abraham is "so shall thy seed be." The Twentieth Century translation of this text reads:

"Now it was to Abraham that the promises were made, 'and to his offspring.' The word 'offspring' was not used in the plural, as if many persons were meant, but the words were, 'to thy offspring,' showing that one person was meant-and that was Christ."

Word from the Spirit of prophecy on this passage in Genesis reads as follows:

"Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,' was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ."-Acts of the Apostles, p. 222.

Other phases of the work of our Savior Jesus Christ as foretold in the writings of the prophets of old will now be reviewed somewhat more or less in tabular form:

### **2. Related to the Birth of Jesus.**

The time of the Advent.

Daniel 9:24, 25; John 1:41; 4:25, 26; Romans 5:6; Galatians 4:4.

The virgin birth.	Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:3; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1: 26-35.
The place of His birth.	Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1, 6; Luke 2:4; John 7:42.
The flight into Egypt.	Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15.
The massacre of the innocents.	Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:17, 18,

### 3. Related to Christ's Life and Ministry.

Many were the symbols and figures used in ancient days by which the coming Messiah was foreshadowed, but only a few will be referred to:

Shiloh	Genesis 49:10	The Desire of Ages, p. 34
The Rock	Deuteronomy 32:4	Ibid., pp. 412, 413
	1 Corinthians 10:4	
The Angel of Jehovah	Exodus 14:19	Mount of Blessing, p. 170
	Acts 7:35, 38	
The Branch	Zechariah 6:12	The Desire of dyes, p. 103
	Luke 1:78	
The I Am	Exodus 3:14	Ibid., p. 52
	John 8:58	
The Cornerstone	Isaiah 28:16	Ibid., p. 600
	1 Peter 2:6	
The Desire of Nations	Haggai 2:7	Ibid., p. 187
	Hebrews 10:37	

Various aspects of the ministry of Jesus were foretold by the ancient prophets. Observe the following:

The beginning and nature of His work.  
 Isaiah 61:1, 3; 42:1, 4; Luke 4:16-21; Isaiah 9:1, 2; Matthew 4:15, 16.  
 His work as prophet.  
 Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:22; 7:37.  
 His purification of the Temple.  
 Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; John 2:14, 15; Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:45, 46.  
 His rejection by the people.  
 Psalms 2:1; John 6:66; Acts 4:25-27.  
 His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.  
 Isaiah 62:11; Matthew 21: 1, 10; John 12:14, 16; Zechariah 9:9.

### 4. Relating to His Sufferings and Death.

The betrayal.  
 Psalms 41:9; Matthew 26:15; Mark 14:10, 21.  
 The sufferings.  
 Isaiah 52:14; 53:4,6,12; Matthew 8:17; Acts 3:18; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18.  
 The piercing of hands and feet.  
 Psalms 22:16; Zechariah 12:10; John 20:27.  
 The insult and mocking.  
 Psalms 22:6, 7; 109:25; Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29.  
 The gall and Vinegar.  
 Psalms 69:21; Matthew 27:34; John 19:29.  
 The lots for vesture.  
 Psalms 22:18; Mark 15:24; John 19:24.  
 Silence in accusation.  
 Psalms 38:13; Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 26:63; 27: 12, 14.  
 Not a bone broken.  
 Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; John 19:36.  
 The crucifixion.

Numbers 21:9; Matthew 27:31, 49; Mark 15:22, 37; Luke 23:33-46; John 3:14; John 19:16-39.  
The death and burial.

Isaiah 53:9, 12; Psalms 16:9; 22:1; 313; Matthew 27:46, 57, 60; Luke 23:46.

"Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption."-Steps to Christ, p. 15.

#### **5. Related to His Resurrection.**

The following passages of Scripture could be studied with profit: Psalms 2:7; 16:10; Joshua 6:12; Isaiah 55:3 with Acts 2:27-31; 13:34, 35; Matthew 27:63; 28:6.

"Under the inspiration of the Almighty, the sweet singer of Israel had testified to the glories of the resurrection morn. 'My flesh also, he joyously proclaimed, 'shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [the grave]; neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.'" - Acts of the Apostles, p. 227.

#### **6. Related to His Ascension.**

Psalms 68:18; 110:1 with Ephesians 4:8, 10; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 1:1

#### **7. Related to His Coming Kingdom.**

His second coming. Psa. 50:3,5; 98:8, 9; Acts 3:20, 21.

His everlasting kingdom. Daniel 7:13, 14; Luke 1:32, 33; Revelation 11:15.

### **Christ Spoke Through the Prophets of Old**

There is an intimate relationship between the Old and the New Testament; in fact, the one is the complement of the other. To understand the one, we need to study the other. Both are important aspects of the divine revelation to men. The more we compare the two Testaments, the better we shall be able to understand God's plan for the human race, and the more fully shall we comprehend the marvelous plan of redemption. If the light of the Old shines upon the New, and the beauty and glory of the New streams through the pages of the Old, the Bible will be to us a wonderful treasure, a book of light and understanding, a book that will be to us in ever-increasing measure the word of the living God.

The Spirit of prophecy has well remarked:

"The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets, is the riches of the Old Testament. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection; Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the treasure of the New. Both Old and New present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker."-Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 462, 463.

### **Both Testaments Have the Same Divine Author**

The reason these two Testaments are so intimately related is that they have the same Author. It is true the messages came through men, men whom God had chosen through the centuries, but they were channels and only channels through whom the Divine Oracles came. The divine and the human were beautifully blended, so much so that the messages bore the marks of human personality. The background, the education, the culture, and the surroundings of the individual all left their impress upon the testimonies of warning and counsel that the messengers of the Most High gave to the children of men.

In the Spirit of prophecy we read:

"It is the voice of Christ that speaks through patriarchs and prophets, from the days of Adam even to the closing scenes of time." - The Desire of Ayes, P. 799.

"The Savior had spoken through all the prophets. 'The Spirit of Christ which was in them' testified beforehand the suffering of Christ, and the glory that should follow." - Ibid., p. 234.

"It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. . . . It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" -Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 366, 367.

"He [Christ] spoke the word of God as He had spoken it to all the Old Testament writers. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ." - Gospel Workers, p. 250.

The same message of salvation, the same unfolding of the purpose of God, the same grand objective to restore all that was lost at the fall of man is discernible all through the pages of Holy Writ. It could hardly be otherwise, for all the books have the same Author and we behold the same divine Person, we recognize the same voice, in them all. On this Dean Farrar has remarked:

"God spoke alike from Sinai and from heaven. The difference of the places whence they spoke involves the whole difference of their tone and revelations. Perhaps the writer regarded Christ as the speaker alike from Sinai as from Heaven, for even the Jews represented the Voice of Sinai as being the Voice of Michael, who was sometimes identified with the 'Shechinah,' or the Angel of the Presence." F. W. FARRAR, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 161, in Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges.

### **Christ With His Church in Old Testament Days**

God had declared to Israel that "my name is in him": it was through Him God spoke to Moses and also to His people in olden times. This is recognized by the New Testament writers, for we read that it was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11.

The same thought is seen also in Hebrews 12:25, where reference is made to Him "that speaks from heaven."

Bloomfield in his Greek Testament tells us that-

"this is by many modern Expositors referred to God; but by the ancient and some modern ones, to Christ; which is far more agreeable to the context." - S. T. BLOOMFIELD, The Greek New Testament (1844), vol. 2, p. 475.

As to the voice that was heard speaking from Sinai, as is recorded in verse 26, he remarks:

"The best Expositors are in general agreed that the [word] . . . refers . . . to Christ, notwithstanding that the thing is in Exodus ascribed to God. Nor is there any inconsistency, since the NT. and the Rabbinical writings agree in representing it as the SON OF GOD, who appeared to the patriarchs, who delivered the Law by angels, and who was the ANGEL-JEHOVAH worshipped in the Hebrew church." - Ibid.

Furthermore, the same blessed Lord is seen in the church in the wilderness. Stephen, in his recitation of God's dealings with His people through the centuries, recalls that the Angel of the covenant was present at the giving of the law at Sinai. (Acts 7:38.)

Moses was the mediator between the Angel of Jehovah and the children of Israel. On this, observe the remarks of Ellen G. White:

"During all the wanderings of Israel, Christ, in the pillar of cloud and of fire, was their leader." - Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 311.

"Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness, -the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host,-but it was He who gave the law to Israel. Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father's law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone."-Ibid., p. 366.

This is still further emphasized in the ancient Jewish paraphrases on the books of Moses. Several centuries before the Christian Era, devoted Jewish writers like Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel and others gathered together oral interpretations and paraphrases of parts of the Sacred Scriptures. In the oral form they hark back to the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile, but in their written form as we have them today they come to us from about the second or third century AD. These were known as Targums, and the dictionary defines this word as:-

"a general term for the Aramaic versions-often paraphrases-of the Old Testament, which became necessary when, after and perhaps during the Babylonian exile, Hebrew began to die out as a popular language, and was supplanted by Aramaic."

It is interesting to observe how the truth of certain quotations from Patriarchs and Prophets is

recognized in these Targums. Attention will be called to a few to enable the reader to see that these Jewish teachers certainly recognized that God spoke and worked through the Angel of Jehovah-the Angel of the Lord, whom we know was none other than Christ the Lord.

1. "It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel.' - Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 366.

To Adam. Genesis 1:27; 2:8; 3:22.

To Noah. Genesis 7:16; 8:1; 9:12, 13, 15, 16.

To Abraham. Genesis 15:1, 6; 17:27; 19:24.

To Jacob. Genesis 28:20, 21 ; 46:1, 2.

To JosEphesians Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, 23.

2. "It was He who gave the law to Israel. . . . It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone.' - Ibid.

In each of the following texts instead of the word "God" or the word "Lord" it will be observed that it was the "Word" who spoke: Exodus 19:3, 5, 9; 20:1, 7; Deuteronomy 4:24, 36; 5:5.

3. "Christ was the angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host.' - Ibid.

Here again the Hebrew word Memra is used in the Targums, which is translated in the English version by "word." Here in place of "and the Lord said," it would be "and the Word said." Note the following scriptures: Exodus 14:15,25,31; Numbers 14:9,20,43.

How true it is that "Christ . . . spoke to His people through the prophets. "-Ibid. It was "the Spirit of Christ . . . in them" which "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11. "In the plan of redemption Christ is the Alpha and the Omega." -Ibid., p. 367. Christ is first, last, and always. He has ever been with His people, He is with them today, and He will be with them forever and ever.

## **Enraptured With the Word of God**

This is an experience the children of God may know as they enter into fellowship with Him. What the disciples experienced in their contact with Jesus on the road to Emmaus must have brought a wonderful revelation to their hearts. The new courage that came to them, the light that broke in on their darkness, led them to exclaim, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" Luke 24:32. The word used for "burn" in this passage is a general word used throughout the New Testament to indicate the thought of "burning." It is used twelve times, eleven of which it is rendered by the word "burn" and once by the word "light." It is the word used for the lights in the Temple, which not only shed light but to a certain degree gave warmth. It is used metaphorically of the glow of ecstasy in the human heart and of spiritual light that dawns upon the soul.

But what an expression, and how full of meaning! This is the only place in the Holy Scriptures where we find an expression just like this. Everything that light is when it shines in the darkness is involved-its satisfying warmth, its brilliance which reveals, enabling us to see that which before was hidden from our eyes. The disciples had read the Scriptures, but they did not understand them; they had pondered carefully the divine words, but they did not comprehend them. Now the light breaks in; the darkness is dispelled; that which was obscure now stands out in all its beauty and radiance. The things that had perplexed them are now clear and plain, and the realization of it all overwhelms them. The intensity of light causes a glow of fervent love to well up in a deep affection for Jesus, whom they now know without shadow of doubt to be the Messiah, the Sent of God.

## **From Jesus to Messiah**

Before the day of the crucifixion many of the people, including even these two disciples, had thought of Jesus as the Christ the Messiah. They had even called Him by this name and had borne their witness to others concerning Him. But the shadows had fallen. Their hopes had been blasted, and as they talked with the Stranger they showed their disappointment, and they called Him merely by the name Jesus.

When asked by their traveling companion as to what was their perplexity, they said, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth." They no longer called Him Christ, the Messiah. That hope had gone. When they realized that His life had been taken, all their hopes had dissipated. The Stranger began to reveal Himself, however. The light began to dawn in their minds. They observed what He had said, "Ought not Christ [Messiah] to have suffered these things?" How this must have impressed their hearts, for here was one, apparently unaware of what had taken place in Jerusalem, calling Him "Messiah." No wonder they were fascinated with the One who walked and talked with them. But their interest deepened, new hope arose in their hearts. Christ "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The word "expounded" in this passage is quite significant. There is another Greek word translated "expound" in the New Testament in such places as Acts 11:4; 18:26; 28:23 that means "to put forth, to expose, to set forth, to declare"; but the word used in this instance has the thought of "to interpret and to interpret thoroughly." The Greek word is used six times in the New Testament, being rendered "interpret" or "interpretation" five times and "expounded" once. Hence, what the Savior did was not so much to preach or proclaim but to take the word of God and give to these disciples a full understanding by interpreting fully the prophecies pointing forward to His crucifixion and resurrection. A well-known commentator remarks:

"He refers them to the word they had read in the Old Testament, which the word they had heard from him directed them to; 'all things must be fulfilled which were written.' Christ had given them this general hint, for the regulating of their expectations, that whatever they found written concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament must be fulfilled in him, what was written concerning his sufferings, as well as what was written concerning his kingdom, those God had joined together in the prediction, and it could not be thought they should be put asunder in the event. All things must be fulfilled, even the hardest, even the heaviest, even the vinegar; he could not die till he had that, because he could not till then say, 'It is finished.' The several parts of the Old Testament are here mentioned, as containing each of them things concerning Christ: 'the law of Moses,' that is, the Pentateuch, or the five books written by Moses; 'the prophets,' containing not only the books that are purely prophetic, but those historical books that were written by prophetic men. 'The Psalms' contain also the other writings, which they called the Hagiographa.' - Matthew Henry's Commentary (London: Partridge and Co., 1854), vol. 3, p. 356.

Then we read that "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him."

Again we say, "What a wonderful experience!" Such an experience, however, may be ours today. It is possible for us to know the sacred gladness of which these disciples became so conscious on that never-to-be-forgotten walk with Jesus. Let us seek for the illumination to beam from heaven into our hearts and minds. As we wait upon God we may hear the still small voice speaking peace to our soul. The Spirit of God is still in His church, and as we seek Him, He will guide us "into all truth."

We read:

"If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch.' - The Desire of Ages, p. 668.

## **Beholding Jesus in the Divine Word**

The tragic thing is that one may read the Scriptures without seeing the Lord and Savior. Many peruse the divine word with critical minds; they are doubtful of the authenticity of the Scriptures. Others fear the ridicule of friends and neighbors; they come to it with a veil upon their hearts. Many are willing to accept the Bible as a revelation from God, but if the heart is not right with Him, they will fail to behold "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

The Jews of old recognized the Holy Writings as of God; they revered the Divine Oracles very highly. At times men could be found who would rather yield up their lives than deny the word of God. But even though they were so privileged, they failed to discern in Jesus of Nazareth the promised Messiah, the Holy One of God.

Time after time Jesus had reminded them of this, as we have already seen, but the veil was upon their hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:15.) Even the disciples had a difficult time to comprehend the Master's words. Their minds were so filled with the prejudices of their times (they entertained with others wrong expectations concerning the coming of the Messiah) that they failed to understand God's purpose in the mission of Christ. Time after time Jesus sought to prepare them for the great crisis of the cross, but it seems as though His words fell, to a large degree, on deaf ears.

Then came the resurrection; then came the experience with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus; then followed the experience in the upper room—the personal revelation of the Christ to their hearts. They could see Him; they could touch Him. Once again their hopes revived, the scales fell from

their eyes, and they recognized even the sufferings of the Messiah as a necessary prelude to the "glory that should follow."

In later days the Ethiopian eunuch, when reading the prophecy of Isaiah, failed to understand the meaning of the divine prediction. But God sent His servant Philip, who "preached unto him Jesus." Here again the light shone, and the darkness fled away. Another soul was illuminated by the divine rays, and there was born in his heart a longing desire to obey his new-found Lord.

So it may be with us. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and if the soul is surrendered to the Lord, there is no limit to the wonderful revelation God will make to the heart and mind. As we read the Holy Bible let us pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may be led to see the Son of God, not only in the Old Testament; but also in the New.

### **3. Searching the Scriptures**

The Bereans -gave serious attention to the word, searching in the holy Writings every day, to see if these things were so." Acts 17:11, The New Testament in Basic English.

Such is the record of one earnest group of believers in the days of the apostolic church. Their noble example has been placed in the story of early days that we might catch the inspiration and go and do likewise. The Holy Oracles, whether of the Old Testament or of the New, constitute God's message to men; they are just as much His message as though He should speak audibly from heaven, and we ourselves should hear His voice.

"So with the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice." Ministry of Healing, p. 122.

The little company at Berea discerned His voice in the Holy Writings, and just as they were commended by the Lord for their earnest and painstaking inquiry into His word, so will the Lord look upon His children today with joy and pleasure as they prayerfully and diligently search into the Scriptures of truth.

The counsel of the Lord to His people is:  
'You should search the Bible; for it tells you of Jesus. As you read the Bible, you will see the matchless charms of Jesus. You will fall in love with the Man of Calvary, . . . you may drink of the wells of salvation. . . . Then your lips will speak thanksgiving to God.'" -Life Sketches, p. 293.

#### **Steps in Searching the Word of God**

Let us meditate on some of the steps that might be taken in our approach to the study of the word of our God.

##### **The First Step**

First, we are urged to hear or to read. In the Apocalypse the divine blessing is pronounced upon him "that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Revelation 1:1 In one place the Savior mentioned that "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Luke 16:29. In another place He refers to those "that hears my word." In other references to the word of God emphasis is laid upon reading the Scriptures of truth. Isaiah earnestly counseled the children of Israel to "seek you out the book of the Lord, and read" (Isaiah, 34:16) ; whereas Ezra himself read in the book of Moses to the people. (Nehemiah 8:13).

Both hearing and reading the good tidings from heaven are good, but there is something of greater importance-that as a result of our hearing or our reading we understand the truth of God. This is what Jesus stressed in His ministry. After outlining the prophecy of Daniel to the people He said, "Who so reads, let him understand." Matthew 24:15. We learn about the eunuch of Ethiopia, who was returning from Jerusalem to his native land, reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The words, however, were unintelligible to him. Over and over again he pondered on their meaning. Then came the servant of the Lord, and as Philip explained the meaning of what was written in the Book, light from heaven dawned upon the mind of this emissary of the Ethiopian queen. Now he understood, and could rejoice in the message that brought such blessing to his heart.

This is the purpose of God, for He declared that those who bear fruit to His glory are those "that hears the word, and understands it." Matthew 13:23. The first thing, then, is to listen, to keep an open ear, or maybe to read the word of God; but we need ever to bear in mind that whether we are listening or reading, God looks to us to understand His word.

##### **The Second Step**

The second step is to meditate on, to give consideration to, to ponder on the Divine Word. We may hear, but unless there is a keen interest we may very soon forget; we may read, but even this may pass from our remembrance, just as sand falls through the sieve. It is vital that we meditate upon the words of life.

The apostle Paul counseled Timothy, his son in the faith, to "meditate upon these things." 1 Timothy 4:15. We are urged to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." Hebrews M. David "considered" God's testimonies. Psalms 119:95. Job "considered the works of God." Job 37:14. So we are to consider for ourselves-we are to meditate-we are to seek to discover new beauties in the Holy

Scriptures, and so be built up in the knowledge of God and in the most holy faith.

The Lord has told us in the Spirit of prophecy:

"Let the student keep his Bible always with him, and as he has opportunity, read a text and meditate upon it. While walking in the streets, waiting at a railway station, waiting to meet an engagement, let him improve the opportunity to gain some precious thought from the treasure house of truth." - Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 463.

"He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures, must meditate upon the truth. "-Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 59, 60.

### **The Third Step**

The third step is to search prayerfully and to study diligently God's Holy Book. This will call for the application of the mind and for earnest thought in the perusal of the Divine Writings. Searching will mean a critical examination, a diligent and faithful comparison of scripture with scripture, with collateral reading from the Spirit of prophecy and works of history, Bible geography, also the manners and customs of ancient times. It will call for fervent prayer and consecration of heart and mind, so that the Spirit of God may lead and guide us into all truth.

This was the experience of the noble Bereans of ancient days. We read:

"At Berea Paul found Jews who were willing to investigate the truths he taught. . . . The minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice. They were willing to investigate the truthfulness of the doctrines preached by the apostles. They studied the Bible, not from curiosity, but in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. Daily they searched the inspired records; and as they compared scripture with scripture, heavenly angels were beside them, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts."--Acts of the Apostles, p. 231.

The Savior Himself gave to the Jews of His day admonition to which we do well to take heed.

"Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

As we study diligently the Sacred Scriptures we are in good company, for the prophets of old did the same thing. We read that they "inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10,11.

Let us follow their noble example and the example also of the little church at Berea, and we too shall find that the word of God contains wonderful treasures of precious truth.

"It is a precious book, a wonderful book. It is a treasury containing jewels of precious value. It is a history that opens to us the past centuries. Without the Bible we should have been left to conjectures and fables in regard to the occurrences of past ages. Of all the books that have flooded the world, be they ever so valuable, the Bible is the Book of books, and is most deserving of the closest study and attention. It gives not only the history of the creation of this world, but a description of the world to come. It contains instruction concerning the wonders of the universe, and it reveals to our understanding the Author of the heavens and the earth. It unfolds a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. Those who are dose students of the word of God, and who obey its instructions, and love its plain truths, will improve in mind and manners. It is an endowment of God that should awaken in every heart the most sincere gratitude; for it is the revelation of God to man." - Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 129.

"The study of the Bible demands our most diligent effort and persevering thought. As the miner digs for the golden treasure in the earth, so earnestly, persistently, must we seek for the treasure of God's word." - Education, p. 189.

### **Knowing the Truth**

It is evident from these considerations that the purpose and plan of God for His children is that they know the precious word of truth. If we heed the divine counsel, we shall be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:17. Put in another form and in relation to the truth of God, it might be listed as follows:

It is desired by God that we know the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 3:7; Hebrews 10:26; 2 John 1); acknowledge the truth (2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:1); believe the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13); obey the truth (Galatians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:22); love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10) ; speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15).

Well has the messenger of the Lord said:

"In the Bible are found the only safe principles of action. It is a transcript of the will of God, an expression of divine wisdom. . . . God has made known His will, and it is folly for man to question that which has gone out of His lips. After Infinite Wisdom has spoken, there can be no doubtful questions for man to settle, no wavering possibilities for him to adjust. All that is required of him is a frank, earnest concurrence in the expressed will of God. Obedience is the highest dictate of reason as well as of conscience."-Acts of the Apostles, p. 506.

## **Christ the Secret of Knowing the Word of God**

Jesus highly revered and deeply loved the word of His Father. Centuries ago the sweet singer of Israel declared concerning Him, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalms 40:8.

As in Jesus, who is both the Son of God and the Son of man, we see the divine and the human perfectly blended, so it is in the Sacred Word of Jehovah. Men speak, men declare the word, the message comes through lips of clay, but God is the Author; it is His word; men were the channels through whom the heavenly message was given.

This has been well expressed in an excellent article on inspiration in the New Analytical Indexed Bible, which reads as follows:

"We are not to assume that inspiration is operative apart from the human channel employed; that it disregards the qualities or characteristics of the one inspired and that he becomes a mere automaton. On the contrary, these very characteristics are employed so that John's Gospel, for example, reflects the qualities of the man John and by the second Gospel we see that a wholly different type of man was used for that task. Paul's Epistles are as different from Peter's Epistles as the man Paul differs from the man Peter. Inspiration, so far from rendering unnecessary the characteristics of those who were inspired, uses them and the inspired message is stamped by the peculiarities of each. It is thus human and Divine."-Pages 11, 12.

This union of the divine and the human in the Scriptures of truth it is our privilege to study, but to enter into such a meditation, guided by the greatest Teacher, is another wonderful privilege. Arthur T. Pierson years ago remarked:

"The Inspired Written Word and the Eternal Living Word are forever inseparable. The Bible is Christ portrayed; Christ is the Bible fulfilled. One is the picture, the other is the person, but the features are the same and proclaim their identity." - Knowing the Scriptures, p. 34.

## **The Scriptures, an Unerring Guide**

It is not surprising to find in the Bible that the word of God bears many of the characteristics of its Author. This will be seen in the following brief classification:

<b>God is-</b>		<b>His word is-</b>	
Life	John 5:26; 6:57	Life	Phillipians 2:16
Righteousness	Jeremiah 23:6	Righteousness	Hebrews 5:13
Truth	Jeremiah 10:10	Truth	James 1:18
Holiness	Exodus 15:11	Holiness	Jeremiah 23:9

This is but natural; we should be surprised if it were otherwise. Our heavenly Father, who is the truth, has given us His word, which is the word of truth. His word is the reflection of Himself. If we desire to see Him and become acquainted with Him, we must read and meditate upon that word. Furthermore, as we accept this divine revelation from heaven, it will beget in our hearts the same qualities. The power in the word of our God transforms human lives, and by the Divine Spirit imparts righteousness and truth and holiness, and if the sons of God are faithful to the end, eternal life will be given to them.

What a privilege it is to have such a wonderful treasure! How we should prize it! How we should believe in it! To believe, however, means more than mere mental assent; it calls for more than a recognition of historical incidents. The evidence that a certain thing happened in the days long ago may be so convincing and so well established that we could not do otherwise than accept it, but Bible believing means more than this. It means more than historic faith; Bible believing means saving faith. It means believing not merely with the mind but with the heart. It is possible to believe in Jesus as a man, to believe that He lived and died, that He rose again and actually ascended to the Father's throne, and yet not be saved by the grace

of God. We may believe this as a historic fact just as I might believe that certain characters in history lived and played the part history assigns to them. Such faith, however, does not save the soul. What is called for is a faith that touches the heart as well as the mind. This is what the apostle Paul meant when in writing to the church at Rome he said:

"If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9, 10.

Notice in these words of counsel that it does not say "believe in thy mind," but "believe in your heart." This is the kind of belief God longs to see. But one may query, How is it possible to believe with the heart? Believing with the mind presents no particular problem, but to believe with the heart, how can such a thing be? It is true that one of the early contacts of the word of God with man is as we find it in the prophecy of Isaiah, where the Lord gives the invitation through His servant, "Come now, and let us reason together." Isaiah 1:18.

Here is the invitation to "reason together." This is where the mind of man plays its part. First of all we hear, we read, we ponder, we meditate upon the message of God; the mind reasons, it examines what is presented; then in some mysterious way something happens. Our minds are convinced of the truth. Now there wells up from our inmost souls a deep longing to obey God and be faithful to the truth of the Bible. That longing soon reaches its climax in surrender, and when this happens peace comes to the soul. The mind was the door to the heart. We were convinced of the truth; then we became convicted of the truth. The one touched the mind, the other touched the heart.

This Holy Book accepted, believed, and trusted implicitly will be a true guide in the uncertain paths of life. It is unerring in its guidance; it will never fail us. Just as God the Father says, "I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalms 32:8), so does God the Son assure us that He is the true and living way (John 14:6). God the Holy Spirit, the true representative or vicegerent of the Son of God in the church, will also guide you "into all truth." So also are the Scriptures designed to lead us in the way of righteousness and peace. The psalmist learned this centuries ago, for he declared, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." PSALMS 119:105.

We can thank God for such an unfailing guide. Observe the words given to us by the Spirit of prophecy:

"We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the roct-11 river, and where is this guide to be found? We point you, dear brethren, to the Bible. Inspired of God, written by holy men, it points out with great clearness and precision the duties of both old and young. It elevates the mind, softens the heart, and imparts gladness and holy joy to the spirit. The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible guide under all circumstances, even to the end of the journey of life. Take it as the man of your counsel, the rule of your daily life.'-- Testimonies, vol. 51 p. 264.

## **The Alpha and Omega of Knowledge**

The Scriptures of truth are a full, complete, and perfect guide to the children of God. Everything we need for our salvation is found therein. The word of God is able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15); it is given also that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (verse 17).

It is the book of knowledge; it is the book of wisdom. It is the alpha and omega of the will of God for men. Just as Christ, the eternal Son, is the alpha and the omega (Revelation 21:6; 22:13), so also is the word of the everlasting God.

## **The Rule of Faith and Doctrine**

The Bible is the divine standard of all true doctrine; it is the standard also by which our lives are to be regulated day by day. God's faithful people all through the ages have recognized His word as such a standard. The appeal in times of controversy has ever been, "What says the scripture?" (Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30); the decision has been recognized as final when the servant of God could declare, "The scripture says" (Romans 9:17; 10:11).

In the long, long ago Isaiah gave the word:

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

From the Spirit of prophecy we have the following counsel:  
"The Bible, and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith." - Testimonies on Sabbath School Work, p. 32.  
"As the Spirit of God becomes better known, the Bible will be accepted as the only foundation of faith." - Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 192, 193.

It is well at times to remember the great conflict that took place during the Dark Ages, when our fathers fought for liberty of conscience and for the unfettered word of God. The well-known protest of the German princes at the Diet of Spires will well repay our careful reading and thoughtful study.

"There is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the Word of God. That the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; and that this holy book is in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness. We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of his only Word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testament, without adding any thing thereto that may be contrary to it. This Word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God."! - D'AUBIGNE, History of the Reformation, pp. 520, 521.

This is a remarkable statement. We can thank God for the courage and for the loyalty of men who took their lives in their hands when appearing before this august council. Their unflinching devotion and integrity secured for us many of the wonderful privileges we enjoy today. The day this protest was read was a great day, a red-letter day in the history of the Reformation church. The Spirit of prophecy comments as follows:

"The appointed time came to appear before the emperor. Charles V., seated upon his throne, surrounded by the electors and the princes, gave audience to the Protestant Reformers. The confession of their faith was read. In that august assembly the truths of the gospel were clearly set forth, and the errors of the papal church were pointed out. Well has that day been pronounced 'the greatest day of the Reformation, and one of the most glorious in the history of Christianity and of mankind.'" - The Great Controversy, p. 207.

In the light of these considerations we should certainly regard the Holy Scriptures as the divine standard in every phase of our experience. Too often the Bible is given little or no place in the regular systems of education. In turning aside from the unfailing guide God has given, men have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jeremiah 2:13. Forsaking the Bible means leaving the light and going into darkness; it means crippling along in the quest for knowledge when we might have the aid of the Spirit of God to guide, direct, and lead our minds to hitherto unattained heights of the knowledge of the wisdom of God.

The Spirit of prophecy has some pertinent paragraphs on this thought:  
"The word of God is to stand as the highest educating book in our world, and is to be treated with reverential awe." - Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 384.

"The Bible stands the highest among books, and its study is valuable above the study of other literature in giving strength and expansion to the mind. . . . The word of God is the most perfect educational book in our world."-Ibid., P. 394.

## **The Study of the Bible**

Quite frequently when urging the study of the Sacred Scriptures, one is met with the query, But how shall I study? This is a problem with many; they know not how to start. It seems a relatively simple matter to read the Morning Watch text, to look up the Scriptures in the Sabbath school lesson, or to read a chapter or a book of the Bible.

It is not such a difficult undertaking to read the Bible through, although this calls for determination and a will to succeed. But when it comes to studying the word, this is not at all easy for many. This chapter is not written with either the teacher or the college student in mind, but it is written for the ordinary members in our churches, those who are busy with the everyday duties of life, duties in the home, in the office, or in the factory. The problem to find time is quite a question in these days of rush and hurry. There are so many duties on the farm, so many things to be cared for in the little time we have, so many duties also devolving upon us as officers of the church, that there seems but little time for definitely searching the word of God. So many demands are made upon us that it is no easy task to so order our affairs that we can

find time to sit down unhurriedly to study the Sacred Word of our God. Yet after all, our spiritual life and growth in grace demand that we do this. This Holy Book is food for our souls, and unless we learn day by day to feed upon God's word, we can hardly expect "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior."

Let us regard our time as a definite gift from God. Let us give study as to how we might fit in periods, even though brief, when we may turn aside from the day's duties and spend a short while in communion with God, with our own hearts, and with His Holy Word.. Counsel from the messenger of the Lord is helpful on this point:

"This lifetime is too short to be squandered in vain and trifling diversion, in unprofitable visiting, in needless dressing for display, or in exciting amusements. We cannot afford to squander the time given us of God in which to bless others and in which to lay up for ourselves a treasure in heaven. We have none too much time for the discharge of necessary duties. We should give time to the culture of our own hearts and minds in order that we may be qualified for our lifework. By neglecting these essential duties and conforming to the habits and customs of fashionable, worldly society, we do ourselves and our children a great wrong.' - Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 146.

Further counsel recognizes that the time we have available may be very short, for we read:

"My brethren and sisters, old and young, when you have an hour of leisure, open the Bible and store the mind with its precious truths." -Ibid., vol. 4, p. 588.

In a study of the Sacred Oracles we need to remember that the Bible is its own interpreter. This needs always to be borne in mind. Concerning this we read:

"The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another." -Ibid., p. 499.

"The word of God is plain in itself; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, which is never contrary to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant.' [John Knox.]" - The Great Controversy, p. 251.

"There are truths in the word which, like veins of precious ore, are hidden beneath the surface. The hidden treasure is discovered as it is searched for, as a miner searches for gold and silver. The evidence of the truth of God's word is in the word itself. Scripture is the key that unlocks scripture. The deep meaning of the truths of God's word is unfolded to our minds by His Spirit." - Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 157.

Another important principle to recognize is that where there are texts that appear to be difficult, there are other texts in the Bible that will explain them. This was one of the vital points that entered into the famous protest of the princes at the Diet of Spires. In this they said:

"There is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the word of God; that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts.' - D'AUBIGNE, History of the Reformation, pp. 520, 521.

Observe also further counsel from the Spirit of prophecy:

"By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed." - Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 499.

"We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture." - The Great Controversy, p. 598.

These are general principles that will guide us in our approach to this, the most wonderful book in all the world. Again we remark that ours is a unique privilege, and we should seize the opportunity and endeavor to become better acquainted with this message from Heaven. Mrs. E. G. White has remarked:

"The privileges and opportunities which they now have of becoming intelligent in regard to the Scriptures should not be neglected. God would have those who profess to be His followers thoroughly furnished with proof of the doctrines of His word.' - Testimonies on Sabbath School Work, p. 108.

If we wish to start in earnest to study the word of God, there are several profitable avenues open to us. We would call attention to the following:

### **1. Character Study.**

This is always a profitable meditation. As we read the sacred pages concerning Abraham and Jacob and Moses and others of the saints of God, we shall not only learn how mightily God used them in His service but also be made acquainted with their weaknesses and with their failures. It will bring courage to us as we see how they overcame in the strength of the God of Israel, how they "waxed valiant in the fight."

Mrs. E. G. White gives us an excellent paragraph in this phase of study:

"The lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through

successive generations to the times of the apostles we have a plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred and the genuine experience of real characters." Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 9.

"Bible history stays the fainting heart with the hope of God's mercy. We need not despair when we see that others have struggled through discouragements like our own, have fallen into temptations even as we have done, and yet have recovered their ground and been blessed of God. The words of inspiration comfort and cheer the erring soul. Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be over comers in the name of Jesus.'" - Ibid., p. 15.

In following the biographical study of the Bible one should read Hebrews 11, Patriarchs and Prophets, and other Spirit of prophecy works. If available, certain small books by F. B. Meyer on the lives of David, Jeremiah, Abraham, Moses, and other Biblical characters will be found helpful.

## **2. Book Study.**

Another beneficial line of study is the books of the Bible. One might consider one of the prophets or one of the epistles and receive much information and real spiritual help from such a meditation. This line of study gives one a view of the book as a whole; one can see the purpose of the writer, with each chapter having its bearing on the purpose and objective of the book. Each book has its message, and to read the book with a view to discovering that message is of special value to our understanding the Bible as a whole.

Many excellent works have been written on the various books of the Bible, and one would of necessity have to exercise great care in choosing an author who was known for his sound Scriptural presentation. A work on book outlines will be found helpful also, and one that is inexpensive was prepared some years ago by Robert Lee and is entitled The Outlined Bible. This was published in London, England.

## **3. Chapter Study.**

If one should hesitate to take such a large assignment of study as a whole book, one could start with a chapter. Then take each chapter in succession, and thus go through an entire book. It will be found, however, that, generally speaking, these chapters are intimately related and follow in sequence, leading step by step to the writer's objective. This is not always the case. One can study a single chapter in the book of Psalms without this difficulty, and the same thing is true in a few other books of the Bible. In chapter study it is important that we discover the message of each chapter. Each verse will have its bearing on this, and we should seek to understand the development of thought in the chapter by giving special attention to each verse from the viewpoint of its relation to the other verses in the particular chapter under consideration.

## **4. Verse-by-Verse Study.**

The procedure in this kind of study is much the same as that indicated in the last section, but yet with a difference. Verse-by-verse study will mean giving special thought to the verses themselves, and usually this is not only an interesting but a profitable phase of study. We are told that "every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men." - Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 504. And still further:

"In daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. One passage thus studied until its significance is clear, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view, and no positive instruction gained." - Education, p. 189.

We shall experience much blessing from the Lord in this method of study, and at times shall receive divine illumination as the truth of God breaks upon our vision.

"Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect; texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning, as a flash of light; you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you. A divine Teacher is at your side." - Mount of Blessing, p. 36.

## **5. Doctrinal Study.**

Many are the grand themes of the blessed Book of God. The plan of salvation, the redeeming work of Christ, is the transcendent message of divine revelation. This we shall never exhaust. Even in the life to come we shall constantly be studying into the wonders of redeeming grace.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God

and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption, and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep harps of gold. And ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.' - The Great Controversy, p. 678.

We should also give study to other doctrines, doctrines intimately related to the central theme of "Christ, and him crucified." We should take first one doctrine and then another, following the divine principle of "here a little, and there a little." If we take it "precept upon precept; line upon line," we shall find that in the course of a year we have covered a good deal of ground. We should all become better acquainted with the doctrines of Holy Scripture, not only that we may know the truth ourselves, but that we may be able to give an answer for our faith at all times. Doctrinal study is profitable, and in following it we shall be enriched in knowledge and spiritual strength.

### **6. Topical Study.**

This is somewhat akin to the previous section but slightly different. We would hardly call the subject of heaven a doctrine; the same would apply to a study of the new earth state. These are in a special sense topical studies. Such a study would mean looking up texts in different parts of the Bible, texts that have a bearing upon the topics under consideration. The themes for study are legion, and our own denominational books will be found helpful in the study of both doctrinal and topical themes.

### **7. Historical Study.**

There is quite a field for helpful meditation in the Scriptures from the historical viewpoint. One might consider the history of the Jews in Old Testament days, or the history of the same people in New Testament times. Reference in the Bible is made also to Babylon, to Egypt, to Assyria, and to other nations. Of course the material given is not complete; it was never intended to be complete, for the Bible does not set out to give the full history of nations. What is given is given particularly because of the connection of these nations with the people of God and the part they played in that relationship. There are, however, excellent and authoritative histories of these nations that can be obtained. Any such study should involve both the Holy Scriptures and the histories that have been written, and this will be informative and helpful and will enable the student to see God's purpose and plan concerning the nations of earth.

## **Encountering Difficulties**

Many are surprised when they experience difficulties in their study of the Bible. Some have complained about this, and felt that the Lord should have made everything so plain that anyone could understand His word without any question whatsoever. In reasoning thus, however, such people overlook one important consideration, and that is, that if everyone could understand everything in the Sacred Scriptures, it would indicate that a mind no higher than theirs was the author of the Sacred Oracles. The fact that there are what appear to be difficulties to us, is rather one evidence of the divine authorship of the Holy Writings. The word itself bears every evidence that a divine mind was the author of the Divine Word. God's thoughts as well as His ways are far above ours. Through the prophet of old He declared:

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9.

We read:

"There are many things apparently difficult or obscure which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them.' - Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 704.

"The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. . . . True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth will find ample ground for faith.' - Education, p. 169.

We can rest assured that God has revealed in His word everything essential to our salvation, and we may know also that He has permitted certain mysteries in the Holy Scriptures to test our faith and our confidence in Him.

## **Blessings From Searching the Word**

It would be impossible to make the word of God the man of our counsel and not receive divine blessings into our hearts and lives. The promise of God is clear and plain. It has always been true that when men hear the voice of God, and decide to be obedient to His will, blessings flow in rich measure into their longing hearts. The revelator many centuries ago declared:

"Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:1

"Blessed are they that do his commandments." Revelation 22:14.

"Blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Verse 7.

Here is a threefold benediction: a blessing on the reader, the hearer, and the doer of the word of God. Jesus laid particular emphasis on the same thought when He announced to the people of His day, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11:28.

But the promise of blessing goes back much further in the history of the human race. The writer of the Psalms stresses the same thing. Notice his words:

"Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night." Psalms 1:1,2.

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies." Psalms 119:2.

Yes, even in the days of wandering in the wilderness, God promised to send from His throne in heaven copious showers of blessing upon His people if they would listen to and obey His Sacred Word.

"Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. For the Lord thy God blesses thee, as he promised thee." Deuteronomy 15:5, 6.

There is something about God's Holy Word that works wonders in the hearts of those who receive it in deed and in truth. It is the "living" word of the eternal God; it is the "powerful" word of Jehovah. When we receive this into our lives, and determine by the help of God that this shall govern and control every action, then this word is the word of life and power to us. It brings new life; it brings spiritual power, and this enables us by divine grace to be "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

It is the purpose of God that this Sacred Word accomplish much for us. By it we are converted (Psalms 19:7), we are cleansed (John 15:3), we are strengthened (Psalms 119:28), we are sanctified (John 17:17), and we are edified (Acts 20:32).

On our part, in receiving these inestimable blessings we are.

To trust God's word.	Psalms 119:42.
To meditate on God's word.	Psalms 119:15.
To rejoice in God's word.	Psalms 119:162.
To love God's word.	Psalms 119:140.
To preach God's word.	Acts 8:4.
To forget not God's word.	Psalms 119:16.

As we learn to have implicit confidence in the Bible, the door will be wide open for Heaven's choicest benedictions to flow into our souls. These divine blessings are many, but only a few of them will be listed, with quotations from the Bible and from the Spirit of prophecy. Earnest, profitable perusal of the Holy Scriptures will

### **1. Strengthen the Mind.**

David, the servant of God, centuries ago testified:

"Through thy precepts I get understanding." Psalms 119:104.

"The entrance of thy words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple." Verse 130.

Confirming this we read:

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times." - Steps to Christ, pp. 94, 95.

## **2. Strengthen the Spiritual Nature.**

The Lord has designed that through the Sacred Scriptures we shall receive the strength and help we need in every crisis. As we meditate upon His Holy Word we shall be "filled with the knowledge of his will"; we shall increase "in the knowledge of God"; we shall be "strengthened with all might." (Colossians 1:9-11.) This Holy Word brings divine strength to the soul. The word itself is power, and as we receive it we receive with it the power of God, which will keep and preserve and save us.

"Even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature. Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development." - Education, p. 124.

## **3. Transform the Character.**

This is one of the marvelous results of the word of the Lord on human hearts. That same word that in the beginning called all things into existence speaks in the Scriptures of truth. When we let it have its way in our lives, it will work miracles, just as it did on creation's morn. The new birth, the awakening from the death of sin to a new life in Christ Jesus, is a new creation. "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation." 2 Corinthians 5:17, R.S.V. This word is power; it transforms the life. Receiving it into the heart, the drunkard becomes sober, the profligate becomes pure in mind. Communities given over to the grossest forms of heathenism are miraculously changed. In place of the drunken orgies and the debasing practices of superstition, there flow songs of praise to God. If we refuse to be "conformed to this world," we shall be "transformed by the renewing" of our minds. Then we shall know in deed and in truth "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12.

This transformation in life is referred to in the Spirit of prophecy in the following words:

"A change wrought by the word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' "- Ibid., p. 172.

## **4. Point Out the Seriousness of the Times.**

All of us need not only to know but to sense the solemnity of the times in which we live. We have surely come to the very end of the last days, and we need to be awake and not sleep as do many. We are the "children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness." 1 Thessalonians 5:5. God has given to His people the "sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19), and this word clearly depicts the serious and solemn scenes to be enacted in the days to come. We need to seek for grace and wisdom, that we may ever be alert, that that day does not overtake us as a thief. (See Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 216.)

## **5. Fill the Soul With the Love of God.**

David, the king of Israel, had learned actually to "love" the word of God. Time after time he broke out in sentiments expressing the deep conviction of his soul: "O how love I thy law"; "thy law do I love." Psalms 119:97, 113. David had gladly received the life giving word into his soul; he loved it with a fervent love, and this in turn begat in his heart an even deeper love for God. This is a two-way experience. When we love God we will keep His commandments; when we receive His word "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."

"Take the Bible as a study book, and see if you are not filled with the love of God. Your heart may be barren, your intellect feeble; but if you will prayerfully study the word of God, light will flash into your mind." - Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 455, 456.

## **6. Fill the Heart With Divine Comfort.**

This is another of the rich blessings from Heaven given to the children of God. How the world craves for comfort today! On every hand there is much to distract, much to annoy, much to disturb our peace of mind, but, thank God, there is comfort in our heavenly Father. He is the "God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3), and He desires that we "through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). As God's people we are to "comfort one another with these words" of consolation and help. (1 Thessalonians 4:18.) Our hearts will be comforted as we are established in every good word and work." (2 Thessalonians 2:17.)

Observe the following words of admonition:

"In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious, there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging

promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One.'! - Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 578.

### **7. Bring Joy and Gladness Into the Soul.**

True joy is heaven born; it is one of the priceless blessings Jesus bestows upon those who accept Him as Lord and Master. His provision for us is not only that we have joy but that we have His joy. He says, "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13) ; and "that my joy might remain in you" (John 15:11). He longs that our "joy might be full." Here it is our privilege to have a foretaste of that blessed experience that awaits the redeemed of which the psalmist wrote, "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Psalms 16: 11. It is true that in this life there will be discouragements and disappointments. We shall be tempted time and again to yield to despondency and to feel that all is hopeless. We are told:

"There is many a brave soul sorely pressed by temptation, almost ready to faint in the conflict with self and with the powers of evil. Do not discourage such a one in his hard struggle. Cheer him with brave, hopeful words that shall urge him on his way. Thus the light of Christ may shine from you. 'None of us lives to himself.' By our unconscious influence others may be encouraged and strengthened, or they may be discouraged, and repelled from Christ and the truth.'! - Steps to Christ, p. 125.

However, let us remember that even now-  
"Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace."-Ibid., p. 130.

## **Prayer and the Study of the Word of God**

The approach to the study of the Holy Scriptures is somewhat different from the approach to the study of other books. Of course in the study of the Bible we must of necessity apply our minds, and seek to understand the meaning of words and incidents and endeavor to see the relation of one part to another. That would be but natural. But if we desire to know the truth and understand something of the Author of this wonderful compilation of writings known as the Old and the New Testament, we need to do more than approach such study merely from the mental viewpoint. As we have already seen, there is such a thing as believing with the heart, and Bible religion is definitely a heart religion. It is true the mind plays an important part, but after all, the mind is the doorway to the heart. In order therefore to understand the Divine Oracles, in order to catch the inspiration and enjoy the experience of being led step by step into the fullness of the truth of God, we must see to it that prejudice is put aside, that our sins are forgiven, and that self is submerged. When we come with an earnest prayer in our hearts that God will open up to us the treasures of His word, He will, by His Spirit, lead us into a fuller understanding of this wonderful revelation from Heaven.

Notice some of the counsel through the Spirit of prophecy as to how we should approach the study of the word of God.

### **1. Do It With Earnest Prayer.**

"The Bible should never be studied without prayer."-The Great Controversy, p. 599.

"As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures."-Christ's Object Lessons, p. 113.

### **2. Seek for the Guidance of the Holy Spidt.**

"Take your Bible and present yourself before your heavenly Father, saying, 'Enlighten me; teach me what is truth.' The Lord will regard your prayer, and the Holy Spirit will impress the truth upon your soul ." - Signs of the Times, May 9, 1911.

### **3. Pray That Angels May Assist Us.**

"They [the Bereans] . . . studied the Bible, not from curiosity, but in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. Daily they searched the inspired records; and as they compared scripture with scripture, heavenly angels were beside them, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts."--Acts of the Apostles, p. 231.

### **4. Come With Surrendered Hearts.**

"The student of the word should not make his opinions a center around which truth is to revolve. He should not search for the purpose of finding texts of Scripture that he can construe to prove his theories; for this is wresting the Scriptures to his own destruction. The Bible student must empty himself of every prejudice, lay his own ideas at the door of investigation, and with humble, subdued heart, with self hid in Christ, with earnest prayer, he should seek wisdom from God."-Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 461

## 4. The Word of God

**“The word of our God endures for ever. And this is the very word which has been preached to you.”  
1 Peter 1:25, Lamsa's translation.**

In the first chapter of his first epistle the apostle Peter emphasizes three incorruptible things, things that are intimately related, and that have a vital bearing on our eternal salvation. In the fourth verse he points forward to the inheritance promised to the faithful children of God, and he designates this the "inheritance incorruptible." In verses 18 and 19 he shows how it is possible to obtain the character that will fit us to dwell in the kingdom of God. This is not through any merit of our own, but through the "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Galatians 6:14.) We were "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." His is the incorruptible sacrifice, which brings to us the inestimable blessings of redemption. This is the divine provision for a lost race, and the only provision whereby man can be saved.

As the apostle further develops the thought, he refers to that unique yet vital and wonderful change wrought in the heart of the one who yields in complete surrender to the claims of Christ the Lord. The old man dies, a new life is begun. In other words, one is "born again" or "born from above"; he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. This miracle is wrought by the implanting of the divine seed, and this, watered by the refreshing of the Holy Spirit, brings forth the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. This divine seed is the incorruptible word of God.

Hence we have the "inheritance incorruptible," the hope set before us; we have the incorruptible redemption, the salvation of Christ Jesus which will prepare us to enter the eternal abode; and we have the incorruptible word, which, when received and obeyed, will transform our lives and work in us to "will and to do of his good pleasure." Phillipians 2:13.

This incorruptible word of our God is the center and circumference of the everlasting gospel message God has given to the children of men. And the apostle declares, "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." This word of God is dynamic; something happens when the word of God begins to work. This is not to be wondered at, for after all the word of God is "alive"; it is the "living" word. We read that "the word of God is quick" (Hebrews 4:12), the word "quick" here meaning "alive," "living," et cetera. The word is so rendered in the phrase "our fathers . . . received the lively oracles" (Acts 7:38); and again in the expression, "I am he that lives" (Revelation 1:18). Yes, the word of Jehovah pulsates with life. Just as God gave to His beloved Son "to have life in himself" (John 5:26), so hath He decreed that His word is life, and that it "lives and abides for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Psalms 119:89. It is the word that will remain when all the ephemeral things of earth have disappeared. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. Hence the word of God, the word that saves, the word of our blessed Lord, not only is a living word; it is incorruptible, and it will stand throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

### The Written Word of God

All through the Scriptures of truth the revelation of the Most High is called "the word of God." It is doubtless called such because it gives the record of what God "said." God spoke His ten-commandment law with His own voice; later He wrote it with His own finger on tables of stone. When He gave His messages to His people He spoke again, but this time through His servants the prophets; they were used as His mouthpiece to convey His solemn appeals and warnings to their hearts. These prophets in many instances committed the sacred messages to writing, and it is our privilege today to read "in the volume of the book" these divine words that "were written aforetime . . . for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

The term "word of God" applies not merely to one part of the Holy Bible but to every part of it. We read:

"The word of God includes the scriptures of the Old Testament as well as of the New. One is not complete without the other." - Christ's Object Lessons, p. 126.

In perusing the sacred pages one is impressed with the fact that much is said about this Divine Word. We might study with profit the texts in the following classifications:

#### 1. What the Word of God Is Called.

Cross	1 Corinthians 1:18	Patience	Revelation 3:10
Exhortation	Hebrews 13:22	Power	Hebrews 1:3
Faith	Romans 10:8	Promise	Romans 9:9
Gospel	Acts 15:7	Prophecy	2 Peter 1:19
Grace	Acts 20:32	Reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:19
Holiness	Jeremiah 23:9	Righteousness	Hebrews 5:13
Kingdom	Matthew 13:19	Salvation	Acts 13:26
Knowledge	1 Corinthians 12:8	Testimony	Revelation 12:11
Life	Phillipians 2:16	Truth	Collosians 1:5
Oath	Hebrews 7:28	Wisdom	1 Corinthians 12:8

## 2. What the Word of God Is.

Engrafted	James 1:21	Never failing	1 Kings 8:56
Eternal	Isaiah 40:8	Powerful	Hebrews 4:12
Faithful	Titus 1:9	Pure	Prov. 30:5
Living	Hebrews 4:12	Sure	2 Peter 1:19

## 3. What the Word of God Does.

Cleanses	John 15:3	Quickens	Psalms 119:25
Comforts	Psalms 119:52	Regenerates	1 Peter 1:23
Converts	Psalms 19:7	Sanctifies	John 17:17
Edifies	Acts 20:32	Satisfies	Psalms 119:103
Heals	Psalms 107:20	Saves from sin	Psalms 119:11
Illuminates	Psalms 119:105	Strengthens	Psalms 119:28
Protects	Ephesians 6:17	Sustains	Hebrews 1:3

## 4. What We Are to Do With the Word of God.

Believe	John 2:22	Obey	1 Samuel 15:22
Eat	Psalms 119:103	Preach	Acts 8:4
Forget not	Psalms 119:16	Receive	Luke 8:13
Hear	Romans 10: 17	Rejoice in	Psalms 119:162
Hide	Psalms 119:11	Taste	Hebrews 6:5
Long for	Psalms 119:123	Trust	Psalms 119:42
Love	Psalms 119:140	Understand	Psalms 119:27
Meditate on	Psalms 119:15		

## The Living Word of God

By this expression we mean "Christ the Living Word." The written scriptures, however, "are quick and powerful"; they are alive; they live and abide forever. But in Christ Jesus our Lord this word is personified.

Among the many names and titles applied to the Savior of mankind, none is more significant or full of meaning than the epithet "the Word." Jesus is called such several times in the New Testament, and in the main by the beloved apostle. This is seen in his Gospel, his Epistles, and the book of Revelation. Seven times is this so applied, but if we list also the pronouns used in connection with these references-and there are about eighteen instances of their use-they will total fully twenty-five. However, the seven specific references are as follows:

"In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1.

"The Word was with God." Verse 1.

"The Word was God." Verse 1.

"The Word was made flesh." Verse 14.

"The Word of life." 1 John 1:1.

"The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost." 1 John 5:7.

"His name is called The Word of God." Revelation 19:13.

There are, of course, other passages where the word is used, and that might with good reason be applied to Christ Jesus the Lord. (See 2 Peter 3:3, 7; Phillipians 2:16, et cetera.)

Furthermore, the term "word," as applied to Deity, was not unknown in Old Testament days. We read concerning Elijah, in 1 Kings 19:7, that the "angel of the Lord" came to him, but later this is referred to as the "word of the Lord" (1 Kings 19:9.) The same thing can be seen in the case of Moses. In Exodus the Divine Record says that the "angel of the Lord appeared unto him" (Exodus 3:2), but Leeser in his notes on this verse remarks:

"The angel who appeared to Moses does not address him: the bodily appearance of the peculiar conflagration, was to arrest his attention; but immediately after, when Moses attempted to inspect it more closely, he is arrested by the Divine word."

And this "Divine word" was none other than Christ the Lord, for He is "The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13); He is also the "angel of the Lord."

Let us give closer study to the three uses of the epithet "Word" as applied to Jesus in the first verse of John's Gospel. There we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

In this verse are emphasized some vital and important truths. Let us observe:

### **1. The Word Was in the Beginning.**

The word "beginning" used here is from the Greek word *arche*, and although it is rendered in several ways in the New Testament, it is the word that is used in connection with creation. It is found in Hebrews 1:10, where, in reference to Christ the Word, we read, "And, Thou Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth."

And in referring to the first marriage in the Garden of Eden the Saviour remarked, "He which made them at the beginning made them male and female." Matthew 19:4.

It is reiterated in John's Gospel, in John 1:2, in the words: "The same was in the beginning with God."

This expression emphasizes the eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Word of the everlasting God. Not only was He in the beginning; He was from before the beginning of the world. The wise man of ancient days declared, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Prov. 8:23.

Leeser's translation of this text is: "From eternity was I appointed chief, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth."

Furthermore the Septuagint English translation gives: "He established me before time was in the beginning, before he made the earth."

With this agree the inspired words of the great apostle to the Gentiles when he declared concerning our blessed Lord, "He is before all things." Collosians 1:17.

### **2. He Was With God.**

The word "with" in the text is of greater significance than what we usually mean when we use this word. The Greek word is *pros*, and means more than merely, "with," "by or through," or even "among." It signifies, among other things, "before the face of."

On this we might observe the testimony of H. R. Reynolds:

"And the Word (Logos) was with God. . . . The preposition is difficult to translate; it is equivalent to 'was in relation with God,' 'stood over against,' not in space or time, but eternally and constitutionally. . . . In addition to the idea of proximity, there is that of 'motion towards.' . . . The personality of the Logos is therefore strongly forced upon us."-Pulpit Commentary on John 1:1.

### **3. He Was God.**

Here the deity of the divine Son is clearly expressed. The word "God" in the Greek text is without the article, and used in this way it means the divine nature or essence. The stress is upon His essential quality rather than upon His character. Jesus then possesses the same nature, the same attributes, the same divine prerogatives as God the Father. He is, as declared by the same apostle in his epistle, "the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5:20.)

The word in the Greek text for "Word" is *logos*. There are several Greek words that are rendered "Word" in our English New Testament, but two of them are vitally important; they are *logos* and *rhema*.

The former is used about three hundred times, and rendered "Word" about 215 times. The latter is used on about seventy occasions, and rendered "Word" about fifty-six times. The two words differ considerably in meaning. Rhema denotes that which is spoken, that which is uttered in speech or expressed in writing; logos is the expression of thought, not so much the spoken word as the conception or idea that is conveyed by that word. So Christ is the Word of God.

"As the spoken word reveals the invisible thought, so the Living Word reveals the invisible God." - The Companion Bible on John 1:1

Apart from the few references to the Old Testament at the beginning of this chapter, what were the ancient records to which John had access? How did he know the truth on this question? How could he sublimate this wonderful revelation of God, that Christ was the eternal "Word" of the ever-living God? Undoubtedly John, like others in the early group of apostles, knew about the Targums of the Old Testament. They were part of their heritage as members of the Jewish congregation. The Targums, or paraphrases of the Old Testament in oral form, had been in use for centuries before the days of the early church. They were regularly referred to in the synagogues, and as a Jew, John must surely have known about them.

On the use of the term "Word" in the Targums, J. W. Ethridge, in the introduction to the Targums of the Pentateuch, the English translation, says:

"Among the momenta of the Targums there is one of such great importance to the Christian theologian, that it would be unpardonable to omit it in these brief notices. I allude to the remarkable use in them of the title, . . . 'MENIRA DA-YEYA, the Word of the Lord.' The Aramaic term . . . Mernra, is a noun, composed with the formative M, from the root Ernra, 'to speak.' In the numerous passages referred to, it is employed with the genitive of the Divine Name.... answering to the New Testament epithet."-The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch (1862), vol. 1, p. 14.

The Hebrew word Memra is used in the Targums as applied to the word of God nearly six hundred times, more than three hundred of which are classified as reasonably certain. This figure is based on an article entitled 'Philo of Alexandria, and Rabbinic Theology,' Appendix II, in The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, by Alfred Edersheim, volume 2.

In this article he deals with the "Memra or Logos of Onkelos," and lists the number of times the word is used in the Targums, not only of Onkelos but in the Jerusalem Targum and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. A study of the paraphrases, or Targums, on the Pentateuch is certainly interesting, illuminating, and instructive. In many places where the word "God" is used they give the epithet "Word"; they give "Word" also for the "angel" of the Lord.

Hence we can see that John, by divine inspiration, gathered up what had been revealed in earlier days, and in a very clear and forceful manner applied this expression to Christ the Lord in the sublime language we find in the opening verses of the Gospel that bears his name.

Mrs. E. G. White comments:

"Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,-one in nature, in character, in purpose,-the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." -Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 34.

Let us then revere the name of Him who enters into the fullest counsels of the Most High, He who is the thought of God made audible, He who is the alpha and the omega, and, thank God, is also the everlasting Word of the eternal God.

## **Nature of the Word**

We have already observed what the word of God is and what it does as it comes in contact with human hearts and lives, but in this section let us notice more in detail something of its eternal nature.

Emphasis will also be placed on something to which reference has already been made, namely, that the word of God is the life giving word. It is all alive; it is full of life; in fact, it is life. When God speaks, something takes place. When He created, it- was by His word. The psalmist reminds us that "he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalms 33:9. As soon as His word went forth from His lips, the thing mentioned in His word came into being. The thing called for was in the word, and when that word was uttered, the thing which hitherto did not exist, came into being at the uttering of the divine word. That word is still further called "the word of power." (Hebrews 1:1) God spoke, and immediately that which He uttered was accomplished. This was seen during the creative week over and over again. "And God said, Let there be light." That was the divine mandate. And what happened?

Immediately the light came into being, for the record says, "And there was light." The same thing was true of every phase of creation, "God said," and Lo! before the gaze of the angelic hosts and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds there unfolded a marvelous sight. The stately trees, the sheep and cattle, the fish of the sea, the birds of the air—all came into being at the express word of Jehovah. What a wonderful experience this must have been! Think of the command in Genesis 1:11, where God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass." Remember that up to this time there was no grass; there were no bushes, no fragrant flowers, no stately trees beautifying the earth, but God spoke. The words echoed around the earth, and before the wondering gaze of millions of angel beings and representatives from other worlds there unrolled a beautiful carpet of green. They saw the earth dotted with exquisite flowers, with bushes, with fruit; and other trees raised their stately forms all over the earth. It seemed to the vast creation, as expressed by the prophet Isaiah, that "the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isaiah 55 :12), and as related by the sweet singer of Israel, "All the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord (Psalms 96:12, 13).

It might be well to list a few features of this life-giving word of the eternal God. In this listing, reference will be made to various texts of Scripture, with short quotations from those selected.

### **1. It Is a Creative Word.**

"We understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Hebrews 11:1

"By the word of God the heavens were of old." 2 Peter 3:5.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Psalms 33:6.

"He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Verse 9.

"In the beginning was the Word. . . . All things were made by him." John 1:1-3.

### **2. It Is a Sustaining Word.**

"Upholding all things by the word of his power." Hebrews 11:3.

"And by him [the Word] all things consist." Collosians 1:17.

"That same word keeps heaven and earth, as they are now." 2 Peter 3:7, Knox's translation.

### **3. It Is a Miracle-working Word.**

"Jesus . . . said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into your house." Mark 2:5, 11.

"His word was with power. . . . And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. . . .

"And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." Luke 4:32-36.

### **4. It Is a Delivering Word.**

"The Lord thy God [word] is he which goes over before thee." Deuteronomy 93.

"Then will the Lord [word] drive out all these nations from before you." Deuteronomy 11:23.

"The Lord thy God [word] is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Deuteronomy 20:1.

"He sent his word. . . . and delivered them from their destruction." Psalms 107:20.

### **5. It Is a Healing Word.**

"But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matthew 8:8.

"As soon as he [Jesus] had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed." Mark 1:42.

"He sent his word, and healed them." Psalms 107:20.

"I am the Lord [word] that heals thee." Exodus 15:26.

### **6. It Is a Rest-giving Word.**

"And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. . . . And there was a great calm." Mark 4:39.

"He will speak peace unto his people." Psalms 85:8.

"My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." John 14:27.

"By returning and resting shall you be saved, in keeping quiet and trusting shall be your strength." Isaiah 30:15, Rotherham's translation.

## **7. It Is a Saving Word.**

"To you is the word of this salvation sent." Acts 13:26.

"Being born again . . . by the word of God." 1 Peter 1:23.

"The engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119:11.

And let it ever be remembered that "this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." 1 Peter 1:25. As the apostle Paul declared at Corinth, "To you is the word of this salvation sent." Acts 13:26. This is the word of power; this is the regenerating word of our God. This word, when received into the heart, brings new life from above, transforms the soul, imparts divine power to overcome sin and to keep us from sinning against God. This is the word spoken of by the prophet Isaiah centuries ago:

"So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:11.

The Lord God of heaven has sent forth His word in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord; it has come to us in the gospel of His Son. We have the story of it in the Old and the New Testament. It has come to you in these sacred pages. Have you received it? Have you made this word your own? Is it effectually working in your heart?

"The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature, and re-creates the soul in the image of God." - Education, p. 126.

"In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God."-Christ's Object Lessons, p. 38.

The power of the Creator, as manifested in bringing the world into being and sustaining it in its orderly path around the sun, is available to us today in the word of God. This is the power that heals the soul as well as the body. It brings deliverance; it makes a way when, humanly speaking, there is no way. This power is ours today as we surrender our hearts to God.

"The same power that Christ exercised when He walked visibly among men is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken to all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ.

...

"So with all the promises of God's word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power."---Ministry of Healing, p. 122.

In the original 1578 edition of the Geneva Bible will be found the following lines on the first page:

"Here is the spring where waters flow  
    To quench our heat of sin;  
Here is the tree where truth does grow,  
    To lead our lives therein.  
Here is the judge that stints the strife  
    When men's devices fail;  
Here is the bread that feeds the life,  
    That death cannot assail."

Let us remember in our witness for God, that such witness, whether spoken publicly or privately, is, as Bernard Manning remarked, "a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word."

## **Partaking of the Word of God**

There is a rich experience awaiting every true believer in Jesus, and that is to enter into the enjoyment of partaking of the nutriment of the word of God. The divine seed, the word, was implanted when we received Christ Jesus the Lord; now we are to grow up into Him. But we grow up into Him when

we partake continually of the same Sacred Word that was instrumental in our being born again. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in him." Collosians 2:6.

This is our privilege, but it is also our duty to grow in the knowledge of the truth and to grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

We are invited also to "taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalms 34:8. When we began to serve Jesus we received the "milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2); now, as we grow, we take more solid nourishment. In the language of the apostle, we begin to partake of "strong meat." This belongs to all who grow in Christian grace and experience.

Frequently in the word of God we find spiritual things likened to some of the foods that grace our own tables. It is likened to "bread" (John 6:48, 58), "food" (Job 23:12), "honey" (Revelation 10:9), and the psalmist, referring to the delight which came to his own soul in partaking of the delectable things of the Divine Word, remarks:

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalms 119:103.

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Psalms 19:10.

Of this Sacred Word we are to partake, and as it is received into the soul, we shall grow in spiritual strength and find victory over sin day by day. We read:

"If you would live the true Christian life, the conscience must be quickened by constant contact with the word of God. All the precious things which at infinite cost God has provided for us will do us no good; they cannot strengthen us and produce spiritual growth unless we appropriate them. We must eat the word of God, -make it a part of ourselves." - Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 195.

"They [the followers of Christ] must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. . . . They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them." - Patriarchs and Prophets, P. 278.

Time and again God counsels His people to enter fully into this experience. The shepherds of the flock must "feed my sheep" (John 21:17); they must also "feed my lambs" (verse 15). The "sheep of his pasture" taste "the good word of God" (Hebrews 6:5), they will prove the goodness and mercy of God. Jeremiah of old knew by practical experience what this meant, for he declared:

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." Jeremiah 15:16.

Jesus also in His lessons, not only to the members of the apostolic band, but to the Pharisees who heard Him, brought the same spiritual truths to their hearts. It took a long time for them to grasp the significance of His words. Jesus said:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.... Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Who so eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, bath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:51-54.

This was strange doctrine, and the Jews standing around raised the query: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Verse 52. Even the disciples complained and murmured, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" Verse 60.

The problem in their minds was so acute that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Verse 66.

Truly, this was strange doctrine, but it was sound doctrine, a teaching that every Christian must know and experience. We partake of Christ when we partake of His word, for Jesus Himself said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Verse 63.

An interesting illustration is seen in the life of David. On one occasion his life and that of his men were in jeopardy. In the crisis, David experienced a real longing for water from a well by the city of Bethlehem. He expressed this desire in the hearing of some of his mighty men. Three of them, without David's knowledge, slipped away from the company, and much to David's astonishment brought him the water he desired. When he saw it, however, he would not drink it, for he said:

"Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men." 2 Samuel 23:17.

Another record gives this wording:

"My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it." 1 Chronicles 11:19.

Obviously had David partaken of this water he would, as he mentions, have partaken of the blood of his men. That water had been secured at the risk of their lives. They might easily have been slain. It was a miracle they had come back alive, and David knew it. These men had been willing to sacrifice their lives for their master, so David refused to drink of the water, because that water represented the blood of these men. In like manner does the word of God in the Scriptures of truth represent the sacred and precious blood of the Son of God. If we partake of the one, we partake of the other. We are told:

"It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine.... Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.' - The Desire of Ages, p. 677.

"As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for Himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves." - Ibid. p. 390.

The following texts might be found helpful in a further study of this vital phase of Christian experience:

Now we can be partakers of-

The divine nature	2 Peter 1:4
Christ	Hebrews 3:14
His promise	Ephesians 3:6
The Holy Spirit	Hebrews 6:4
The living bread	1 Corinthians 10: 17
His holiness	Hebrews 12:10
Spiritual things	Romans 15:27
Heavenly things	Hebrews 3:1
Chastisement	Hebrews 12:8
Sufferings	2 Corinthians 1:7

THEN we, shall be partakers of-

The inheritance of the saints in light	Collosians 1:12
His glory	1 Peter 5:1

As we thus receive the word of our God into our souls, Christ will abide in us day by day. We shall then experience that intimate fellowship with Jesus, that the "word of Christ" may dwell "in you richly in all wisdom" (Collosians 3:16) ; then Christ Himself will dwell in our lives. And we shall know in a fuller and in a richer measure that the gospel is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Collosians 1:27), and shall be enabled to say with the apostle Paul:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20.