

God Speaks To Modern Man

15:10. Said Pilate, "Behold.... I find no fault in him." John 19:4.

This holy, perfect, eternal Christ, of whose character the law was a written transcript, and whose life was a living revelation of that same law-this Christ, God gave to save you. No other being in God's universe could meet the demands of the holy, unchangeable law of the eternal God, and make that obedience available to you. "Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression." - Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 63.

He lived for you (Matthew 20:28). He died for you (1 Peter 2:24). He offers pardon to you (1 John 1:9). He offers grace and power to you (Hebrews 4:16). He offers heaven to you (Matthew 19:27-29).

Do you hesitate and say, "I do not understand how these things can be"? God did not say, "Whosoever understands the science and philosophy of the atonement of My Son on Calvary shall have everlasting life." He said, "Whosoever believes in him."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Acts 16:31.

The dying thief looked, believed, and received assurance of Paradise (Luke 23:42, 43). The living centurion, watching the dying Christ, said, "Truly this was the Son of God." Matthew 27:54.

The sinful, conscience-smitten publican cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and went down to his house forgiven (Luke 18:13). Sinful David pleaded, "Cleanse me from my sin." "Create in me a clean heart," and God heard his prayer (Psalm 51:2, 10).

If you will believe, you shall receive. Do not trust to feeling. Take your sins to the cross. Exchange them for forgiveness. Ask God to give you a new heart, and write His holy law upon it, that you may love it and keep it. Believe that as you have prayed in the name of Jesus, God does this. Surrender your all to Him. Make no reservation. Give all. Receive all that God gives.

"These blessings we by faith receive, By simple, childlike trust:
In Christ is God's delight to give; He promised, and He must."

12. What the Bible Is

THERE is a story of a visitor who asked of a little boy, "How old are you?"

"Well," replied the boy, "according to my latest personal check my psychological age is twelve, my moral age is four, my anatomical age is seven, and my physiological age is six; but if you wish to know my chronological age, I am eight years old." Almost everyone today knows more large words than did his grandparents. Yet the Bible, which is the world's greatest book and the largest seller, is often read less and understood less than it was in the past.

In a check of nearly fourteen thousand New York City grammar school children one out of every four had never heard of the Ten Commandments.

THE WORD BIBLE

Strange as it may seem, the word Bible is not found in the actual text of the Bible. It may be printed on the cover or in introductory or appended pages, but it does not appear in the writings of the Book itself.

What does the word Bible mean, and why are the Sacred Writings called the Bible? The word Bible comes from the Latin *biblia*, signifying books, which comes from the Greek *biblos*, book. Thus the word Bible means "books." The Holy Bible therefore indicates the holy books. This is indeed appropriate, for the Bible truly is composed of many books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament, or sixty-six in all.

BIBLE'S NAME FOR ITSELF

What then is the Bible's own name for these writings? To discover the more general title as found in the Bible, let us turn to four statements made by Jesus. The first is Luke 4:16-21:

"And he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

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The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

Here we have the record of that dramatic scene in the synagogue at old Nazareth, on that memorable Sabbath day when Jesus announced His mission to the world, as predicted in the writings of Isaiah the prophet. Reading a portion, Jesus referred to it as “this scripture.”

Again we read His words in Matthew 21:42: “Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?”

Yet again we hear His words: “you do err, not knowing the scriptures.” Matthew 22:29. Once again He sums it up. It was after His resurrection, as He walked with two of His discouraged followers on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus as night was drawing on. After their sad recital of the crucifixion He said to them: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:25-27.

Thus the ancient writings of the Bible Jesus called the “scriptures.” That word means “writings,” so we often appropriately call the Bible the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, or Writings.

THE CONTENT OF THE SCRIPTURES

What writings are included in the Scriptures? This is a most natural and important question. Since there was no New Testament in the time of Christ, His references to the Scriptures always denote the Old Testament.

There is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New. They are a unit, standing or falling together. The Old is the foundation for the New. It has been written that there are more than 250 direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament. Professor George Milligan says that the book of Revelation is “absolutely steeped in the memories, incidents, thoughts and language of the church’s past. . . . It is a perfect mosaic of passages from the Old Testament.”

The Old Testament has been likened to a Damascus blade, which was made of the finest iron and steel, kneaded together and heated, forged, and tempered to take an edge that was irresistible. So the Old and New Testaments are in figure forged together, then heated and welded in the fire of divine inspiration until they come out as “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17.

What did Jesus say was included in the Scriptures, which in His time denoted only the Old Testament? The three main divisions of the Old Testament He gives us clearly in these words spoken after His resurrection from the dead.

“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. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” Luke 24:44, 45.

Here is the threefold division of the Old Testament: the law of Moses, or the first five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—called also the Pentateuch; the second division, or the prophets, which took in all the rest of the Old Testament save that called the Psalms. The third portion included not only what we now call the Psalms but Ruth, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations.

The Roman Catholic Douay Bible has seven books in the Old Testament that are not accepted by Protestants. They are Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and First and Second Maccabees. Other additions are six extra chapters to the book of Esther, and seventy more verses in the third chapter of Daniel.

In this connection it is important to note that Christ and the apostles never made any quotations from these additional writings, known as the Apocrypha. Aside from these added books, however, the Douay Version is an excellent translation. The New Testament writings are also spoken of as the Scriptures. Peter thus refers to the Epistles of Paul:

“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,

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which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

So the apostle Peter refers to Paul’s writings on the same basis as “the other scriptures.”

Then Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes the record of Luke 10:7: “The laborer is worthy of his reward,” and refers to the statement as “scripture.”

Thus we reach the clear conclusion that the writings of both the Old and New Testaments constitute the Scriptures, the fundamental Bible name for the writings of the book which we call the Bible.

In more than fifty places in the New Testament an appeal is made to ‘the Scripture’ or ‘the Scriptures’ in such a way as to show that those words were as definite in their meaning then as they are now among evangelical Protestants.” - G. FREDERICK WRIGHT, *The Divine Authority of the Bible*, p. 37.

Consider these two statements of Jesus: “The scriptures must be fulfilled.” Mark 14:49. “The scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

Little wonder, then, that the apostle Paul insists on the unity and value and inspiration of “all scripture” (2 Timothy 3:16) and exclaims with the most sincere spirit of inquiry, “What said the scripture?” (Romans 4:3).

“How blest are we, with open face To view Thy glory, Lord.
And all Thy image here to trace, Reflected in Thy word!”

13. What Men Say About the Bible

BEFORE proceeding further with what the Bible says about itself, we would profit by considering something of what leading men of various times and stations in life have said concerning the Book of books.

UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS SPEAK

Woodrow Wilson: “A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of intimate knowledge of the Bible!”

Herbert Hoover: “The study of the Bible ... is a postgraduate course in the richest library of human experience!”

Calvin Coolidge: “There is no other book with which the Bible can be compared and no other reading that means so much to the human race.”

Theodore Roosevelt: “Almost every man who has by his lifework added to the sum of human achievement of which the race is proud, of which our people are proud, almost every such man has based his lifework largely upon the teachings of the Bible!”

Abraham Lincoln: “In regard to this great Book, I have only to say that it is the best Book that God has given to man!”

Andrew Jackson: “That Book, sir, is the rock on which our Republic rests.”

George Washington: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible!”

OTHER VOICES IN CHORUS

Queen Victoria: “This is the secret of England’s greatness, the Bible.”

William E. Gladstone: “I have known ninety-five great men in my time, and of these, eighty-seven were all followers of the Bible.... Though assailed by camp, by battery, and by mine, the Holy Scriptures are nevertheless a house built upon a rock, and that rock is impregnable.”

Dr. James McGray:

“Despised and torn in pieces,
By infidels decried
The thunderbolts of hatred,
The haughty cynics’ pride
All these have railed against it,

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In this and other lands,
Yet dynasties have fallen,
And still the Bible stands!”

Immanuel Kant: “The existence of the Bible as a book for the people is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced.”

Thomas Huxley: “The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and oppressed.”

Daniel Webster: “If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.”

General Douglas MacArthur: “Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed.”

John Wanamaker: “I have, of course, made large purchases of property in my time, involving millions of dollars. But it was as a boy in the country, at the age of eleven years, that I made my greatest purchase. In the little mission Sunday school I bought a small red leather Bible for \$2.75, which I paid for in small installments. Looking back over my life, I see that that little red Book was the foundation on which my life has been built and has made possible all that has counted in my life. I know now that it was the greatest investment and the most important and far-reaching purchase I ever made.”

Dwight L. Moody: I never saw a useful Christian who was not a student of the Bible. If a man neglects his Bible, he may pray and ask God to use him in His work, but God cannot make much use of him.”

Canon Dyson Hague: “The depth of the Bible is infinite. Millions of readers and writers, age after age, have dug in this unfathomable mine and its depths are still unexhausted. . . . You cannot gild gold. You cannot brighten diamonds, and no artist can touch with final touch this finished Word of God. This proud pinnacled century can add nothing to it. It stands as the sun in the sky. It has the glory of God.”

Cordell Hull: “Humanity desperately needs today a moral and a spiritual rebirth—a revitalization of religion. There is no sure way to this supreme goal save through adherence to the teachings of the Bible.”

John Wesley: “I want to know one thing—the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a Book! Oh, give me that Book! At any price, give me that Book of God!”

Henry Van Dyke: “No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own.”

John G. Whittier: “We search the world for truth; we cull The good, the pure, the beautiful, From graven stone and written scroll, From all old flower fields of the soul. And, weary seekers of the best, We come back laden from our quest. To find that all the sages said Is in the Book our mothers read.”

14. How the Bible Came to Us

WE HUMAN beings have a thirst to know where things came from. It is perfectly natural for us to inquire concerning the origin of this most famous Book in the world.

This is the Book that H. L. Hastings said contains “history, genealogy, ethnology, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, eloquence, medicine, sanitary science, political economy, and perfect rules for the conduct of personal and social life.”

What is the primary source of the Scriptures? Men claim that the Bible is the world’s greatest book. What does this Book have to say regarding its origin? Is it just the world’s greatest book, or is it something more than human?

THE BIBLE TESTIFIES

The authority of the Bible prophets is greater than the words of any human being, even though he might rise from the dead thousand years after he was buried. Said Jesus of a certain character in one of His parables, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Luke 16:31.

There are five important things to remember about the giving of the Scriptures.

The first and most significant is this positive declaration by that flaming, living torch of gospel

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truth, the apostle Paul: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3:16. This recognizes God as the fountainhead of "all scripture," the fundamental source of the whole Bible.

The second point is given by the apostle Peter in these words: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 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. Thus we understand that Christ was intimately connected with the giving of the Scriptures.

The third agency in the giving of the Scriptures is set forth in connection with the fourth, as clearly stated by the same apostle Peter: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. As God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit cooperated in the creation of the world and the making of man, so here we find the three working together in giving to the world the Bible through men. Men "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." David expressed the same truth when he said, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Samuel 23:2. Thus man was a fourth agent used by the Spirit of God.

There is yet one more living agency involved in the giving of the Holy Scriptures. A beautiful picture of the process is presented in the first verse of the book of Revelation. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Revelation 1:1.

God gave the message to Christ, who sent it by His angel to the prophet John; then John spoke or wrote the message for the people. The angel is the new agent brought to view in this scripture. This particular angel is called "his angel," and he is generally considered by Bible students to be Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26).

From God, to Christ, to His angel, to the prophets who spoke, or wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." That was the method. Thus it was "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." Hebrews 1:1. The Bible is the divine-human book, a book from Heaven given through men to men.

A WORD ABOUT THE BOOKS AND WRITERS

The Ten Commandments God Himself first spoke, then wrote upon two tables of stone, and "he added no more." Deuteronomy 5:22. This sacred law of Scripture stands apart and separate, spoken to men by God and written by Him. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible and is generally conceded to be the author of the book of Job. Joshua was also commissioned to write (Joshua 24:26).

Then came the long period of the kings, first Saul, David, and Solomon, then the divided kingdom of Judah and Israel, with the books of Samuel, parts of Kings and Chronicles, the Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, also Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos.

In close connection with the time of captivity in Babylon there came the messages of Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. It is understood that the later portions of Kings and Chronicles were written in this period.

After the Jews were restored to their own land the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were also added. The Old Testament was completed some three or four hundred years before Christ. The New Testament was finished by about AD 100.

The whole Bible was thus brought into being over a period of more than fifteen hundred years, and portions were written by nearly forty different men. What a miracle is its origin, its preservation, its unity, its beauty, and its power!

WHAT MEN HAVE SAID

H. L. Hastings wrote, "Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen, by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of the rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert in Shepherds' tents, in 'green pastures,' and beside 'still waters.' Among its authors we find the tax gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges; men of every grade and class.... It contains all kinds of writing; but what a jumble it would be if sixty-six books were written in this way by ordinary men.

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Suppose, for instance, that we get sixty-six medical books written by thirty or forty different doctors of various schools, . . . bind them all together, and then undertake to doctor a man according to that book! ... Or suppose you get thirty-five ministers writing books on theology, and see if you can find any leather strong enough to hold the books together.”- Will the Old Book Stand? p. 21.

Voltaire said the Bible was an exploded book. It is his theory that is exploded, for he has been dead more than 150 years and the Book is still here.

Ingersoll, a man of rich talent, declared that the Bible would not be read in ten years. It has been long years since he died, yet the Bible today is still a best seller.

Like a cube of granite, the Bible is right side up no matter how many times you overturn it, and it leaves its imprint everywhere it goes. It has been translated into more languages and dialects than any other book. Completed nearly two thousand years ago the Bible or portions of it may be read today in more than one thousand tongues, and it is the most up-to-date book in the world. Someone has written:

“The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are moldering in the dust; the avalanches Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen. The pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for fishermen’s nets; Sidon has scarcely a rock left behind; but the Word of God survives. All things that threatened to extinguish it have aided it, and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that man can build, how enduring the least word God has spoken. Tradition has dug many a grave for it; intolerance has lighted for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; but the Word of God still endures.”

“Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith’s door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.”

“How many anvils have you had, said I,
To wear and batter all these hammers so?
Just one, said he, and then, with twinkling eye,
The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.”

“And so, thought I, the anvil of God’s Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed-the hammers gone.”

Author Unknown

15. Why Do Men Need the Bible?

THE Bible, which is often referred to as the Scriptures, is T also called “the book of the Lord- (Isaiah 34:16), “the gospel of God” (Romans 1:4), “the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2), “the good word of God” (Hebrews 6:5), and “the word of Christ” (Colossians 3:16).

This Book of divine origin Heaven has provided for man. Why? What is the purpose of the Book? Why do men need it? Of what help is it to them?

Man’s need of the Bible is just as universal as life and death. Sir Walter Scott, famous writer of Scotland, sickly as a child, robust as a man and successful beyond his fondest dreams, found himself upon his deathbed as a result of overwork in an effort to pay off debts from an unfortunate business collapse. In that twilight hour of his life he said to John Lockhart, his son-in-law and later biographer, “Read to me from the book.”

Thinking of the vast writings of Sir Walter, John said, “Which book shall I read?”

Scott replied, “Need you ask? There is but one Book.” So there at old Abbotsford, with his children gathered about him, and while the darkness of death deepened, he listened to the reading of God’s Book, the Bible, and saw a great and comforting light as he fell asleep September 21, 1832.

The Bible is God’s lamp of hope for all men. It is God’s antidote for despair. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the

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scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4.

In these dark days of human history when black clouds of dire destruction hurry across our skies, the promises of the Bible have been given that “we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” Hebrews 6:18, 19.

It will firmly hold in the straits of Fear, When the breakers tell that the reef is near; Though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow, Not an angry wave shall our bark overflow.

“When our eyes behold, in the dawning light, Shining gates of pearl, our harbor bright, We shall anchor fast to the heavenly shore, With the storms all past forevermore.” - PRISCILLA J. OWENS

OTHER SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE BIBLE

We now consider other specific purposes of the Bible, other reasons why men need the Scriptures. Perhaps the fullest summary in a few words is given by the apostle Paul in these two verses:

“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.

First in Paul’s list is doctrine. The word doctrine means teaching, a truth, a tenet of faith. In fact, the Revised Standard Version, Weymouth, and Moffatt read, “profitable,” or “useful,” “for teaching.”

And according to the Scriptures, men need doctrines. It is profitable for us to study doctrines. There may be at times a feeling within us which says, “I do not like doctrines. I want only the Spirit. Just give me spiritual things.” Now, the truth is that doctrines are of the Spirit, for “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.” One of the greatest needs the church and the world today is the setting forth in clarity and certainty of the great doctrines of true faith and morals. We need to believe something, and to know why we believe what we believe. Too many are vacillating, “carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Ephesians 4:14. Many do not know what to believe, and are more sure of what they do not believe than of what they do believe.

It was the same in Jesus’ day. He was just beginning His public ministry and was concluding His Sermon on the Mount. To the people He said, in essence, “If you will believe and do the things I say, you will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. If you do not believe and do the things I say, you will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.” That sounds the note of certainty. Matthew writes of this experience in chapter 7, verses 28 and 29: “It came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Jesus believed something. He stood for something.

There has never been a great religious awakening without the preaching of great doctrines. One might as well try to build a substantial house without putting in a good foundation and without rugged framework, as to attempt the erection of strong Christian character without faith in great doctrines. A Christian without fundamental beliefs is like a body without bones.

Truly the body needs more than bones, lest it be but a skeleton. Nevertheless, to be a successful body, it must have bones—good bones. Christian experience needs more than doctrines, but to be successful, it must have them. “All scripture is profitable for doctrine.”

Not only is the Scripture profitable for doctrine, establishing us in an understanding of fundamental divine truths, but according to this same verse (2 Timothy 3:16), it is profitable for reproof.

None of us relish reproof—not by nature. Yet God finds it necessary to reprove us. A man who does not think he is sick will not seek a physician. God cannot remedy our weaknesses if we do not have knowledge of them, and acknowledge them, though God does not delight in reproofing man.

Christ was in conversation with a woman of questionable character. He talked to her about the water of life. He tried to help her without calling attention to her sin. Making little progress, He said to her. “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” I have no husband, she answered.

Jesus replied, “Thou has well said . . . : for you has had five husbands; and he whom you now has is not thy husband.” John 4:16-18. Christ placed His finger on her sin, and in this case was able to save the woman, howbeit she first sought to save face by arguing for her religion as against His, and her place of worship as against that of the Jews.

Secret sins of the heart, such as pride, envy, hatred, and covetousness, which may escape the view of man, are seen by God and are especially hateful in His eyes. The Scriptures are scheduled to reveal. as

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an X-ray, this inner trouble. In Hebrews 4:12 we read: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Bible will reveal the crooked and misshapen bones of doctrine, and bring to view the selfish and evil thought. Thus does the Word of God become a reprover of sin, whether that sin be in a believer or unbeliever. It is no respecter of persons. Anyone who searches the Scriptures with honesty of heart will find that he will be reproved. Evil unproved is dangerous.

Correction follows reproof. Mere reproof would be of little value if no change for the better could be effected. Here again the Word of God is the agent. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction! Moffatt says, "For amendment."

The Scriptures not only set up great beliefs, they not only reprove us individually for individual sins, but tend to correct the evil pointed out, to effect an amendment of life and to keep us on the right path.

Alexander McLeod tells somewhere of two young men who visited a factory to discover the secret of a new machine that clever man had invented, and to make secret drawings of it.

In their hotel room one of the young men opened a Bible the twentieth chapter of Exodus and read the Ten Commandments. When he came to the eighth one he could go no farther, for the words seemed to flash like fire, and smote upon his conscience, "Thou shall not steal." Those men went home without the secret of the machine, but with the secret of personal power. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psalm 119:9.

Down in the ancient land of Egypt, youthful, lithe, and handsome Joseph was sold as a slave, only later to become the manager of the household of Potiphar, who was captain of the king's guard. When tempted to sin at the invitation of Potiphar's wife, under the enticement of secrecy and the lure of favor and reward, Joseph said to her, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Day after day this sultry-voiced, dusky beauty of Egypt's land cast her eyes upon Joseph and engaged the stalwart youth of God in stealthy, whispered conversation. His answer was always No. He would neither betray his master on earth nor be untrue to his Master in heaven.

What did it cost him to say that word No? The price was prison, where they fettered his feet with chains and laid him in iron (Psalm 105:18).

What was the secret of his power? The principles of righteousness learned in his father's tent in Canaan were in his mind and heart. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11. He lived as under the direct gaze of God, subject unto His word, and thus did he prevail in the hour of temptation. Standing on the very edge of a perilous precipice, he was steadied by the word and presence of God. One writer has said, "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."- ELLEN G. WHITE, Steps To Christ, p. 95.

CHRIST IN ALL THE BIBLE

In Genesis He is the Seed of the woman.

In Exodus, the Lamb of God foreshadowed.

In Leviticus, the High Priest typified.

In Numbers, the Star of Jacob.

In Deuteronomy, the Prophet like unto Moses.

In Joshua, the Captain of the Lord's host.

In Judges, the Messenger of Jehovah.

In Ruth, our Kinsman and Redeemer.

In Samuel, the Lord and Seed of David.

In Kings and Chronicles, King of kings.

In Ezra and Nehemiah, Lord of heaven and earth.

In Esther, our Intercessor.

In Job, our risen Redeemer.

In Psalms, the Son of God.

In Proverbs, One brought up with God.

In Ecclesiastes He is above the sun.

In the Song of Solomon, altogether lovely.

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In Isaiah He is the atoning and glorified Savior.
In Jeremiah, the Lord our Righteousness.
In Lamentations, the Man of Sorrows.
In Ezekiel, Prince and Priest.
In Daniel, the Messiah cut off, and then Ruler of the world.
In Hosea He saves the backslider.
In Joel He utters His voice and shakes the earth.
In Amos He reproves and restores.
In Obadiah, the Lord of His kingdom.
In Jonah, the risen Prophet.
In Micah, the Ruler born in Bethlehem.
In Nahum, the Bearer of good tidings.
In Habakkuk, the Holy One with Calvary's scars.
In Zephaniah, a saving Lord in their midst.
In Haggai, the Desire of all nations.
In Zechariah, thy King, meek and lowly.
In Malachi, the Sun of Righteousness.
In Matthew, Emmanuel-God with us.
In Mark, the Stone the builders rejected.
In Luke, the forgiving Creditor.
In John, Creator, Redeemer, and coming King.
In Acts, the ascended Lord.
In Romans, Justifier of the unjust.
In 1 Corinthians, the Hope of the resurrection.
In 2 Corinthians, Constraining Love.
In Galatians, Redeeming Grace.
In Ephesians, Head of the church.
In Philippians, Power of a resurrected
In Colossians, the First-born of every creature.
In 1 Thessalonians, the Voice that raises the dead.
In 2 Thessalonians, feared of sinners, admired of saints.
In 1 Timothy, the only Mediator between God and men.
In 2 Timothy, Giver of the crown.
In Titus, the Blessed Hope of the world.
In Philemon, the Author of peace.
In Hebrews, our great High Priest.
In James, the Lord whose coming draws nigh.
In 1 Peter, the Lamb without blemish.
In 2 Peter, the Daystar to our hearts.
In Epistles of John, the Word of life.
In Jude, Michael the Archangel.
In Revelation, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

GREATEST PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

The greatest single purpose of the Bible we have left for the last, in order to make impressive the fact that it should be not Only last but also first.

The Bible is likened to a lamp (Psalm 119:105), to food (Matthew 4:4), to a hammer and to fire (Jeremiah 23:29), to honey (Psalm 119:103), and to a sword (Ephesians 6:17). These and other important considerations we pass by for a brief look at the central figure of the Scriptures.

Concerning Himself the Son of man said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last." Revelation 1:17. To the Jews at Jerusalem at the time of one of their religious feasts, when they were seeking to slay Him in the early days of His ministry, Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

Of His actions after His crucifixion and resurrection we have this record: "Beginning at Moses and

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all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:27.

In these words it is made unmistakably clear that from beginning to end the Scriptures brought revelations concerning Christ.

It was Christ who from the bush Moses saying, I AM THAT I AM. “Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Savior, is God ‘manifest in the flesh.’ 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says, “I AM, the Good Shepherd.” I AM the living Bread.” I AM the way, the Truth, and the Life.” “ALL power is given unto ME in’ heaven and in earth.” [John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18.] I AM the assurance of every promise.” “I AM; be not afraid.” ‘God with us’ is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.” - *The Desire’ of Ages*, pp. 24, 25.

The Bible reveals the Man, and when men find the Man everything else will come out all right.

Have you found the Man of the Book? Have you made Him your Savior, your Friend, your Pattern, your Power?

The Man of the Book is your Friend. Faith in this Man is nourished by the Book. Stay close to the Man. Stay close to the Book. “This Book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this Book.” The secret of your perfection (2 Timothy 3:17) lies in your submission to, and association with, the perfect Man and the perfect Book.

“O Word of God Incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky, We praise Thee for Thy radiance That from the hallowed page, A lantern to our
footsteps, Shines on from age to age.

“It is the golden casket, Where gems of truth are stored; It is the heaven-drawn picture Of Christ, the living
Word.

“O teach Thy wandering pilgrims By this their path to trace, Till, clouds and darkness ended, They see
Thee face to face.”
-W. W. How

16. Is the History of the Bible True?

DID you know that when George Washington was President of the United States there was nothing definitely known, aside from the Bible, concerning the history of peoples of the world prior to the date 400 BC, the date of the oldest reliable histories of Greece and Rome? In other words, at the time George Washington died there was not a single document known to be in existence that was written in the time of Old Testament history. Therefore the Old Testament had no witnesses to call to its aid when its statements of historical fact were challenged. Yet there was the Bible, claiming to give the history of the world back, not to four hundred years, but to four thousand years before Christ.

HISTORIANS QUESTIONED BIBLE HISTORY

Historians, with no evidence from other sources to support the Bible, raised questions as to the reliability of Biblical history. Scoffers pointed in scorn to stories of men and nations that they claimed never existed. Militant skeptics shot their arrows of unbelief, thinking that they could inflict a mortal wound on God’s living Word. If the Bible record of Israel and the nations were true, why was there no other record of the same happenings? They asked. And they boldly assumed that because the Bible record stood alone it was most likely false.

Furthermore, they said that the art of writing was a comparatively modern art; therefore, the supposed records of Moses, for instance, could not be reliable, for the simple reason that people did not know how to write in Moses’ day-fifteen hundred years before Christ, or some thirty-five hundred years ago. So they set later dates for these writings. They had particular objection to the book of Daniel, claiming

that it was written long after the time of Babylon and Medo-Persia.

A THING OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

To those of us who believe the Bible, and its representation of God as one who definitely has something to do with the affairs of men, it seems a thing of divine providence that during the very time when the reliability of the Bible is questioned, great and notable discoveries have been and are being made which testify to the accuracy of the Bible record. The spade, pick, and shovel have unearthed the remains of ancient nations before known only in Bible history.

Mark B. Chapman says, "Great mounds that had lain untouched for millenniums have been dug up and thoroughly examined, and amid the debris of these buried and forgotten ruins have been found not only the remains of palaces, temples, monuments, and great buildings, but immense libraries, inscribed bricks, vases, tablets, and mural inscriptions, which have given us the history and chronology of those ancient and almost unknown people, with their manners and customs, their social surroundings and scientific knowledge, and their very thoughts and emotions." *Mounds, Monuments, and Inscriptions*, pp. 9, 10. The history thus dug from the earth itself has borne mute but abundant testimony that the Bible record is reliable.

Another writer has said: "It must be accounted a wonderful providence of God that, at a time when so much is being said and done to discredit the Old Testament, so marvelous a series of discoveries, bearing directly on matters contained in its pages, should have been made." - JAMES ORR, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (Scribners), p. 396. This investigation of ancient ruins is known as archeology. The leading countries of the world have societies organized to carry on this work. In the light of discoveries made, Dr. Robert D. Wilson, professor of Semitic philology in Princeton Theological Seminary, said, "I have come to the conclusion that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament. Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible in the original texts have stood the test."

THREE CLASSES OF ANCIENT WRITINGS

According to Prof. W. W. Prescott, author of *The Spade and the Bible*, the ancient writings that have been unearthed fall into three general classes: the inscriptions, the papyri, and the ostraca.

The inscriptions include writings that have been found inscribed upon metal, stone, wood, or clay. One writer says, "The bulk of the inscriptions are on stone, but to these must be added inscriptions cast or engraved in bronze or scratched on tablets of lead or gold, a few wax tablets, the scribblings (graffiti) found on walls, and the texts on coins and medals." - *The Spade and the Bible*, p. 19. There are hundreds of thousands of these inscriptions. The best known of these are the Moabite stone, the Rosetta stone, and the Behistun inscription, of which more will be said later.

Then there are the writings on papyrus, or the paper of those days. This paper was made of the pith of the papyrus plant, the method originated in Egypt. Milligan says: "The pith (byblos) of the stem was cut into long strips, which were laid down vertically to form a lower or outer layer. Over this a second layer was then placed, the strips this time running horizontally. And then the two layers were fastened together and pressed to form a single web or sheet (kollēma), the process being assisted by a preparation of glue moistened, where possible, with the turbid water of the Nile, which was supposed to add strength to it. After being dried in the sun, the surface was carefully rubbed down with ivory or a smooth shell, and was then ready for writing." - GEORGE MILLIGAN, *Selections From the Greek Papyri*, Introduction, pp. xxi, xxii. (Copyright, 1910. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.)

A long sheet could be made by fastening many sheets together to produce the roll spoken of in the Bible. The ink used, even in the days of the disciples, was made of soot, mixed with gum, and diluted with water. A color, which had a wonderful lasting power, was thus produced, as may be seen by examining any of the recently recovered texts." PRESCOTT, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

"The great bulk of the papyri," according to those who know, "are of the nonliterary character: as legal documents of the most various kinds, e.g., leases, accounts, receipts, marriage contracts and wills, attestations, official edicts, petitions for justice, records of judicial proceedings, and a large number of documents relating to taxes, then letters and notes, exercise books, charms, horoscopes, diaries, etc., etc. They enable us to revive a long period of ancient life." - *Ibid.*, p. 23.

The third class of writings, which has thrown light on the lives of ancient people and has been especially helpful in understanding New Testament Greek, is known as ostraca—broken pieces of pottery found in the rubbish heaps of many cities. They were used by the poorer classes of the people in place of the papyrus which was more expensive.

The notes on these broken pieces of pottery are naturally briefer, but they give us an insight into the lives of the poorer classes.

Now, it is evident that with all these thousands and thousands of inscriptions, whether on wood, stone, metal, papyrus, pottery, clay, brick, walls, or whatnot, we could gather no information unless we could decipher them to know their meaning. No living person knew how to read them.

So we turn to the fascinating story of how three stones yielded their secret to the perseverance of men, and unlocked the ancient languages to us, uncovering evidence in support of the history of the Bible. As long as we live there will always be room for doubt, but God provides ample evidence for us to believe. The Christ of your Bible is the Christ of a Book that has stood the storms of the ages. If you will accept Him and build on His Word, your Christian character building will withstand every wind, storm, and flood of doubt, destruction, grief, and temptation.

17. When Stones Speak

JESUS CHRIST rode toward the city of Jerusalem, accompanied by a triumphal procession, which grew larger and still larger as He neared the city. There went up a continual shout, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 21:9. Many Pharisees witnessing the scene sought to turn the current of popular feeling. They pressed through the crowd to Jesus, who was the object of the people’s acclaim, and said to Him, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.” Luke 19:39. Jesus replied, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Verse 40. When the time comes for God’s plans to be carried out, they will be carried out, though perhaps not by the ones who should be expected to do it.

Our attention turns to the story about how three ancient stones gave up their secret, unlocking the old languages of Egypt and Babylonia, thus enabling men to decipher the writing found on metal, stone, wood, and pottery of millenniums ago.

You have all heard of Napoleon Bonaparte, that extraordinary light of military genius that flashed on the world, glowed brilliantly, and suddenly went out in darkness. Napoleon, impelled by dreams of conquest and glory, led a French expedition into Egypt in 1798. With him and his four hundred transport ships were not only his brilliant generals and thirty-eight thousand men but more than one hundred distinguished scholars, scientists, artists, and engineers. In fact, the work of these one hundred men was to be of far greater value to the world than the battles of his army.

THE ROSETTA STONE

The following year, 1799, one of these men was doing some digging not far from the mouth of the river Nile, near the town of Rosetta, in Egypt. There he found a “strange looking granite stone. It was nearly four feet tall, about two and one-half feet wide, and nearly a foot thick. One face of the stone was smooth, and was divided into three parts, one above the other, and upon each part was an inscription. The inscription on the lowest portion was in Greek, and so could be read by the scholars, but the characters on the other two portions were strange and meaningless to them.” Prescott, *The Spade and the Bible*, p. 25.

Nearly twenty years passed by before any adequate attempt was made to find the meaning of the two strange inscriptions. Finally a Frenchman by the name of Champollion set himself to the task. He proceeded on the theory that all three inscriptions actually said the same thing. The Greek inscription he could read, of course. But to prove that the other two should be read with the same meaning was not so easy, he found. For four years he labored before he could announce to the world that he had deciphered the mysterious writing on the stone.

One of the inscriptions proved to be the ancient picture writing of Egypt, the hieroglyphic, and the other a later form of picture writing known as the demotic. The discovery of this Frenchman made it possible for men to read the thousands of inscriptions found upon monuments, tombs, and tablets throughout Egypt. Thus was brought to light testimony to support the records of the Bible. This stone was

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the Rosetta stone, discovered in Egypt in 1799 and deciphered some twenty years later.

THE BEHISTUN INSCRIPTION

From Egypt and the Nile let us take a swift journey to the land of Persia. We go to the small town of Behistun, described as “a village at the foot of a precipitous peak some 1,700k feet high, in the Zangers range in Persia, on the right bank of the Samas-Ab, a tributary of the Kerkha.”

Prescott says, “On the face of this high peak, about 500 feet from its base, Darius I, king of Persia, carved a great inscription in three kinds of ancient writings. . . . The lower part consists of eight columns about eleven feet high, three of the columns being in the Susian language and five in Persian. Above these columns is one column in the Babylonian language, and a large sculpture representing Darius putting his foot on the body of Gaumata, who attempted to usurp control of the country. This Behistun inscription was discovered in 1835 by Henry Rawlinson, a British army officer then located in that region.” - *Ibid.*, p. 26. He spent parts of four years in making a copy.

There was the inscription five hundred feet up the side of the great cliff. Just below the inscription was a ledge fourteen inches wide upon which a daring copyist might stand at the peril of his life while attempting to copy the inscription. The higher portions were reached by a ladder standing on this narrow ledge. A swing was let down from above for Mr. Rawlinson to copy the highest portion. Not only was he 500 feet up the side of the cliff, but below the base was a 350-foot chasm.

After these four years of daring work it took eighteen years more of study to decipher and to complete a translation of the strange characters that he had copied. He had followed the same principle that led to the deciphering of the Rosetta stone inscriptions. The greater part of the time Mr. Rawlinson worked on the inscription without the aid of books, for he was stationed where there were none.

The deciphering of this group of inscriptions unlocked to the world the cuneiform writing of old Babylonia, whose history was known only in Bible records.

THE MOABITE STONE

Now let us go fifteen miles east of the Dead Sea to a town named Dibon in the land of Moab. In 1868 a missionary discovered a stone four feet high, two feet wide, and fourteen inches thick, according to Prescott. He says that on one side of the stone was an inscription in Phoenician letters. The missionary dickered with the native Arabs for the stone, settling on a price of four hundred dollars. Meantime, some French residents at Jerusalem heard of it, and offered four times the four hundred dollars for it. The superstitious natives, thinking that some magic must be in the stone, heated it, poured cold water on it, and broke it into several pieces and divided it among themselves. The scattered fragments were finally gathered together sufficiently for scholars to read it.

The stone had been erected by Mesha, king of Moab, to the god Chemosh, about 850 BC, commemorating Moab’s deliverance from Israel. Prescott says, “Israel is mentioned four times; Omri, the king of Israel, is named; Jehovah, the God of Israel, is recognized; and the domination of Omri over Moab is twice spoken of.”-*Ibid.*, p. 29. Here is one of the many instances where the ancient writings confirm the historical trustworthiness of the Bible. The Bible gave us this record long, long ago, and the stones now cry out their testimony to the truthfulness of the Bible story, found in this instance in 2 Kings 3:4. We may remember that this memorial stone is called the Moabite stone, found in the land of ancient Moab in 1868.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, I believe in the spade. It has fed the tribes of mankind. It has furnished them with water, coal, iron and gold. And now it is giving them truth-historic truth the mines of which have never been opened till our time.” The stones uncovered with the spade speak to us in favor of the old Book, God’s Book, the Bible. Read it, believe it, practice it. This Book that presents the Creator presents also the Redeemer, the Man of Calvary, who bore the cross and gave promises of the’ crown. A modern friend of His wrote:

“I would not ask my Lord to take away
The cross He bids me carry when I pray,
For the heavy burden placed upon me there
Perhaps is but the answer to my prayer.”

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“Others may walk in brighter paths today
And find a lighter cross to bear away,
But the cross that Jesus chooses just for me
Is one that keeps me close to Calvary.”

-MARJORIE LEWIS LLOYD

18. Other Evidence

THE Bible history of the Old Testament, long standing alone, now has abundant support from writings unearthed from the ruins of ancient times. Only a little can be cited here.

KING SARGON AND NINEVEH

The prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 21:1, mentions the name of Sargon, king of Assyria. No such name being known to secular history, the critics loudly asserted that no such king lived and that the Bible, therefore, was unreliable. And then the French archeologist Botta, excavating in the ruins of Nineveh, uncovered the Assyrian palace built by King Sargon, covering twenty-five acres of gardens, lakes, and parks, surrounded by a high wall pierced by two gates on each side. Again the spade stood by the Word of God.

BELSHAZZAR OF BABYLON

Every reader of the Bible is familiar with the story of the fall of Babylon, recorded in Daniel the fifth chapter. Daniel says that the king who was slain that night was Belshazzar. This would of necessity make Belshazzar Babylon's last king.

History gave us no such king, but listed Nabonidus as the last reigning king of Babylon. Thus the book of Daniel lay open to the charge of unreliability.

But the spade came to the rescue. Through the discovery of Sir Henry Rawlinson we now know that for many years Nabonidus lived in retirement at Tema, and “came not to Babil.” We know, too, that his son, with the nobles and army, was in Babylon. One inscription reads: “And as to Belshazzar the exalted son, the offspring of my body, do you place the adoration of the great deity in his heart. May he not give way to sin; may he be satisfied with life's abundance; and may reverence for the great divinity dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born favorite son.”

So Daniel had it right, and the historians who said there was no Belshazzar had it wrong. When the Bible says one thing and men say another, it is safer to believe the Bible.

Take some detail like the reference in 1 Kings 4:26; 9:15-19; 10:28, 29. Here King Solomon is represented as gathering together so many horses that he had to stable them about in different cities. Along comes the excavator with his spade. At the spot of Megiddo, where Solomon had some of his horses, the very stables were found. There were stalls for large numbers of horses and quarters for their grooms as well as shelter for chariots. We may rely upon it that the Bible is true, The apostle Paul in Romans 3:4 said, “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” When God speaks to us through His Word we may trust it to be true, even though some men have not yet found it out.

WHY BELIEF ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT

It is not enough merely to believe that the Bible is true. This can never suffice. “The devils also believe, and tremble.”

Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Thus we are to live by the Word of God. Jeremiah wrote, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” Jeremiah 15:16.

How can a man eat the words of God, you ask? How can the Word of God become food to us? Jesus said in John 4:34, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Thus it is. When a man studies the Word of God that he may know God's will, that by His grace he may do His will, and help to finish God's work on earth, that man will find God's Word to be food. This is in harmony with

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the statement of Jesus: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

"Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou did break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O living Word!"
MARY A. LATHBURY

19. Are the Prophecies of the Bible Reliable?

A CONVENTION of weather forecasters met in a certain city on a day selected as least likely for rain. It rained. With all the modern means of mapping air pressures, wind direction and velocity, and cold and warm air masses, forecasters often miss the mark.

People have always had a keen interest in knowing about the future. Fortunetellers have plied their trade for ages. A person puzzled by having some female wizard tell him what his name is (most people know their names already), pays out good money for personal readings which purport to be reliable information on his future. Much of it is like the counsel that came from an ancient, oracle to an army general. "A great army would be defeated if, he went into battle. The battle took place. An army was defeated-the general's own army! True, the enemy army might have, been destroyed, but in either case the oracle would be correct. Much of man's prediction is double talk, like that of some radio commentators. Then whatever way it turns out they proclaim their great prophetic ability.

Astrology is another prophetic line fed to Americans at the reported rate of 200 million dollars worth annually, soothing their worries with mumbo jumbo and horoscopes. People pay up to fifty dollars a session to learn how to get rich. One stargazer' is reported to have taken in fifty thousand dollars in one year from Wall Street people.

Top diplomats seek counsel on world affairs. More people just want to know, "Will I get married?" "Will I succeed?" "Where is Henry?" There is everything from business and vocational astrology to radix and sexual astrology.

WHAT ABOUT BIBLE PREDICTIONS?

What can be said for the forecasting of Bible prophets? Is it any better? First of all, what claim is made in Scripture for this type of thing? Does the Bible itself profess prophetic reliability? From Isaiah 42:8, 9 we read the following: I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Then from the New Testament we note this invitation, challenge, and counsel: "Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21.

God asks no man to believe the prophecies of the Bible without testing them, proving them. Then if they stand up, hold fast to them.

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Let us first check a prediction made to Abraham more than one thousand years before the days of Isaiah. This would be one of the former things.

We read God's word to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. . . . But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." Genesis 15:13-16.

Here was a prophecy of slavery and deliverance. Abraham died. His grandson, Jacob, with his household went down to Egypt in the days of his son Joseph's high office. From favor and freedom they

fell into disfavor and slavery. Decades went by. The time of predicted deliverance was at hand. A proud Pharaoh, which knew not Joseph, declared, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Exodus 5:1

Israel was up against a hard and adamant Pharaoh. The king of Egypt was up against a prophecy of God. Who would prevail? God said, "Let my people go." Pharaoh answered, "They stay." As well might man seek to bind in fetters the ebb and flow of the ocean tides or build a wall to stop the stars, as to challenge the power of the word of God. Said Jesus, "The Scriptures must be fulfilled." Mark 14:49.

The fulfillment we read as follows: "It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:41.

THE PUZZLE OF EGYPT'S DECLINE

After the time of Isaiah, Ezekiel forecast the Permanent decline of Egypt. This was one of the "new things" declared by God before it sprang forth. Of Egypt, Ezekiel wrote:

"It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations." Ezekiel 29:15.

Egypt was not to disappear. It was to stand on a lower rung of the world ladder. Egypt had been the "granary of the world," "the mother of science and letters and art. At the fire which burned upon her hearth, the nations had kindled the lamp of knowledge."

She had been pictured at that time as standing "alone among the nations, great, wise, and self-respecting; around her the choicest treasures of earth; her land filled with imperishable monuments of might and skill and genius; her people, in their order and enlightenment and civilization, a marvel of all time!" When the Mohammedan hosts approached the city of Alexandria centuries later "the sight of its magnificence and wealth filled the children of the East with amazement."

Despite the grandeur and glory that seemed destined for unending ages, decay and disintegration have ravaged both people and objects. "The hopeless bondage of centuries has quenched every spark of ambition in the breasts of the descendants of the Pharaohs; and under the iron heel of oppression, genius and talent, and even intellect itself, seem to have been extinguished," says one writer. Modern Egypt is awakening along with all the nations, but the glory of world empire no nation can gain again.

Thus God's declarations are fulfilled both specifically and generally. "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46:9, 10.

THE EBB TIDE OF TYRE

Tyre means "rock," and the city got its name from the double rock off the eastern Mediterranean coast, which was the supposed site of the first settlement. The historian Herodotus traces its traditional history over two thousand years before the time of the prophecy concerning Tyre.

Tyre, the beautiful, had grown until she was known as "mistress of the sea." Rich with "the fine gold of Tarshish, the precious stones of Aram, . . . the beautiful ivories of Damascus, the fine linen of Egypt, . . . the perfumes of Sheba, the slaves of Javan," she was the rival of Rome, and "the commercial center of the world."

At the very time when the tide of her power and glory was at its flood, around 600 BC, the prophet Ezekiel lifted his voice in warning from God: "I will also scrape her dust from her." "And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.... and I will make you like the top of a rock: you shall be a place to spread nets upon; you shall be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, said the Lord God." Ezekiel 26:4, 12-14.

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took the city after a thirteen-year siege, breaking down buildings and walls and slaying the people in savage fury. Yet the ruins remained. Tyre had not had her timbers and stones thrown into the sea, nor her dust scraped to the top of the rock foundation. Concerning the final fulfillment, Earle Rowell says:

"Two and a half centuries passed, and still the ruins stood, a challenge to the accuracy of prophecy. Then through the East the fame of Alexander the Great sent a thrill of terror. He marched swiftly to attack new Tyre, 332 BC. Reaching the shore, the city he had come to take, with half a mile of water between them, for it was built upon an island. Alexander's plan of attack was speedily formed and

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vigorously executed. He took the walls, towers, timbers, and ruined houses and palaces of ancient Tyre, and with them built a solid causeway to the island city. So great was the demand for material that the very dust was scraped from the site and laid in the sea.” - *Prophecy Speaks*, p. 20.

Though the judgments of God may linger, His Word is sure. After the flood tide of fame and riches and power and glory, Tyre the beautiful became but a lonely barren rock for the stretching of fishermen’s nets, when her tide ebbed and prophecy was fulfilled.

“Who is like me? Let him come forward with his claim, let him state out his case before me. Who foretold the future long ago? Pray let us hear what is still to be? Fear nothing, dread not in the days to come; have not I foretold it and announced it long ago? You are my witnesses whether there is any god, any power at all besides me.” Isaiah 44:7, 8, Moffatt.

THE MIRACLE OF THE JEW

Frederick, the king of Prussia, asked a leading preacher of his country this question: “Tell me what is the greatest evidence that the Bible is inspired?”

Without a moment’s hesitation this prince of the pulpit replied, ‘The Jews, Your Majesty, the Jews!’

The gifts of God to the Jews, and thereby the gifts of the Jews to the world, are indeed very considerable.

Worshippers of our God, the Creator, depositaries of the Ten Commandments on tables of stone, observers of the weekly Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the sign of their allegiance to their Creator, believers in the coming of the Messiah as a great deliverer, the Jews were designed to be a blessing to all the world, and their Temple of worship a “house of prayer for all people.” Isaiah 56:7.

One of the greatest Christian Jews who ever lived put it in these words: “What advantage then bath the Jew? ... Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God”; “who are Israelites. To whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Romans 3:1,2; 9:4, 5.

PROMISES OF PEACE AND WORLD LEADERSHIP

The God of Israel made bold promises to His people, promises that would appeal to the heart’s deepest desires for peace, quiet, and absence of fear, as well as for lawful ambition and the reward of intelligence, diligence, and integrity.

Through Moses, God said to them: “You shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.” If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; ... I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.” Leviticus 19:30; 26:3-6.

Through the prophet Jeremiah there came to the Jews in a time of great spiritual declension, when their love of money had outrun their love of God, these thrilling words of daring promise: ‘It shall come to pass, if you diligently hearken unto me, said the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein. Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, and this city shall remain for ever.’ Jeremiah 17:24, 25.

But it was business first and religion second. So across the bright sky of Israel’s hopeful future scurried the black clouds of trouble and tragedy.

Even the Jewish Prince of Peace must close His ministry of pity and love with words that rumbled a warning of coming destruction and desolation: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killed the prophets, and stoned them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:37, 38.

FOUR PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE JEWS FULFILLED

1. To Be Scattered. “If you wilt not observe to do all the words of this law,” “the Lord shall scatter you among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other.” Deuteronomy 28:58, 64.

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“The whole remnant of you will I scatter into all the winds.” Ezekiel 5:10.

“My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.” Hosea 9:17.

Tradesmen, bankers, musicians, publishers, scientists, doctors, writers, and entertainers—the Jews are found all over the world. Someone has said that they drink out of every river in the world from the Ganges to the Mississippi.

The estimated Jewish population was less than 16 million in 1939. And 5 million may have perished in World War II, leaving but 11 million. Yet a traveler would think there were many times that number. Some 5 million reside in the United States. They seem to be everywhere.

2. To Be Despised. “Thou shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead you.” Deuteronomy 28:37. I will ... make them an astonishment, and an hissing.” Jeremiah 25:9.

These prophecies have been fulfilled and continue to be fulfilled before our very eyes and in our very ears. Go any place where Jews in any number dwell, and you will find them a “byword” and a “hissing” among the people. This is true of them as of no other race.

When one first encounters this experience he is shocked at this almost universal spirit to despise the Jew. A leading American questioned a leading Jew, his friend, to learn his explanation of this seeming abnormal feeling. Their friendship cooled. The situation is a delicate one, and in some ways mysterious. One must be on guard lest his own heart join up with the multitude in this uncanny and practically universal attitude to hold in scorn and contempt this extraordinary race of men.

We can attempt no study of the varied intricacies of this baffling problem here. But we may know this: “The Jew received great light from God. He did not live it. He did not give it. He would accept no additional light. As a depository of the truths of God he was rejected. For nearly two thousand years he has been a byword and a hissing on the lips and tongues of men in fulfillment of the Scripture prophecy. Jesus, the greatest Jew who ever lived, said to the Jews, ‘The scripture cannot be broken.’”

3. To Be Persecuted. “I ... will draw out a sword after you.”

Leviticus 26:33. “And you shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall you eat” (verse 29), declared the God who loved them with “everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Two million of them perished or went into a slavery worse than death when in AD 70 the Roman sword and slaughter broke through the siege of Jerusalem. And before that fateful day, in their desperation they ate the flesh of their own children.

Moses had once led them from Egyptian slavery, but God warned them: “The Eternal will take you back to Egypt ... by a route which I said you would never tread again, and there you shall let yourselves be sold as slaves to your enemies.” Deuteronomy 28:68 Moffatt.

History tells of how they “were brought in droves, and sold as cheap as horses.” (See H. H. MILMAN, *The History of the Jews*, vol. 2, p. 436)

In Egypt many labored in the mines, men and women, young and old, often in chains, driven under the lash until their wasted bodies crumpled under the sheer weight of their burden, and they perished with their last ounce of strength expended in slavish toil. These were the ancient counterpart of the modern slave-labor camps. The rolling wheels of the centuries leave the ugly imprint of their sorrowful story embedded on the tragic trail of time.

Let the historian Milman tell it: “No fanatic monk set the populace in commotion, no public calamity took place, no atrocious or extravagant report was propagated, but it fell upon the heads of this unhappy caste. In Germany the Black Plague raged in all its fury, and wild superstition charged the Jews, as elsewhere, with causing and aggravating the misery and themselves enjoying a guilty comparative security amid the universal desolation. . . .

“The same dark stories were industriously propagated, readily believed, and ferociously avenged, of fountains poisoned, children, crucified. . . . Oppressed by the nobles, anathematized by the clergy, hated as rivals in trade by the burghers in the commercial cities, despised and abhorred by the populace, their existence is known by the chronicle . . . of their massacres.” *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 222, 223.

In our day the tide of their terror has risen to new heights. “It is known that in Poland under the Nazis eighty thousand were murdered in one night.” - *America*, October 13, 1945, p. 32.

In World War II thousands were shot, hanged, or beheaded one by one. Hosts were enslaved,

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worked, starved, or beaten to death. They were put to death in gas chambers, burned in stacks, buried in huge mass graves. The Nazi call to exterminate the Jew brought destruction to the reported estimate of 5 million.

No modern picture can surpass in perfection of detail the one painted by the prophetic hand of Moses, their great leader at the time of their first deliverance. Warning against disobedience, he predicted: "The Lord shall scatter you. . . . And among these nations shall you find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give you there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes; and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall fear day and night." Deuteronomy 28:64-66.

The terrific tension of their lives as a result of persecution is given in this striking and pitiful picture: "You shall be utterly crushed and broken continually, till you are driven mad by the sight of it all." Deuteronomy 28:33, 34, Moffatt.

4. To Be Indestructible. Although they were to be scattered, despised, and persecuted, they were not to die out as a people. Though God said, I will break this people . . . as one breaks a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again" (Jeremiah 19:11), yet they were not to disappear.

"Thus said the Lord, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night . . . : if those ordinances depart from before me, said the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." Jeremiah 31:35, 36.

H. L. Hastings wrote: "Scattered through every land and in every clime; mingled among all people; adapting themselves to all circumstances, climates, conditions, and governments, and though oppressed and scorned and spurned, yet ever rising to honor when the pressure of persecution is removed. Going from the prison house of Egypt to ride in the chariot of Pharaoh, and from among the children of the captivity to sit in the high places of Babylon and Persia. Gaining influence, winning wealth, obtaining power, and defying competition; more prolific, orderly, temperate, healthy, and long-lived than any other race. More numerous, wealthy, and influential today, after eighteen hundred years of dispersion and oppression, than they were in the calmest days of David and Solomon-the historian, the patriot, and philosopher cannot fail to observe in the existence of this scattered nation a phenomenon well worthy of the most careful consideration."- *Will the Old Book Stand?* p. 225.

Michael Beer, one of their own writers, says: "Braving all kinds of torments, the pangs of death, and still more terrible pangs of life, we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions, and countries, . . . like a column left standing amid the wreck of worlds and ruins of nature. The history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears to the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind; it is likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction." - *The Jewish Problem*, pp. 54, 55.

SUMMING IT UP

The descendants of Abraham went into Egyptian slavery as God predicted to Abraham, and came out at the time forecast.

Egypt went into permanent decline to become one of the "basest," or less significant of nations, as foretold by Ezekiel the prophet, never to regain her former place of greatness.

Tyre, mistress of the sea as Babylon was of the land, was to become but a barren rock, scraped clean of soil, a place for fishermen to dry their nets, and it is even so. Ezekiel the prophet was right.

The disobedient Jews were to be a scattered people among the nations, taunted and despised, living under persecution and fear and tribulation, yet as indestructible as the Book that records with unerring accuracy the prophecies set forth concerning them. The majority of Jews have no desire to return to Palestine.

Bible prophecy is God's challenge. "Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." Isaiah 41:23.

"I am the Lord. . . . Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." Isaiah 42:8, 9.

Prophecy is a distinctive badge of Bible inspiration and reliability. It is more sure than eyesight, and is God's great light to guide us till the rising of the Daystar (2 Peter 1:16, 19).

20. What About Noah and the Flood?

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

www.answersingenesis.org

MANY people ask about the Bible story of Noah and his great ship, the ark, some five hundred feet long and seventy-five feet wide, tossing on a shoreless ocean. Is the story of the Flood true or untrue, reality or myth, fact or fancy?

The settled views of some modern scientists and theologians would eliminate this story from the book of facts. They would make quick settlement of the whole question by saying, "The Flood story is myth. It belongs to the pages of childish fables."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

What does Moses, author of the book of Genesis, say? In Genesis 7:4 God says, I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." Verses 19 and 20 state: "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered." That is the story as given by the first Bible writer. Now let us turn the pages to the writings of the apostle Peter, penned in New Testament times some fifteen hundred years later. In 2 Peter 3:3-6 he says: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of [or forget], that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Peter not only testifies to his belief in the Flood but prophesied that in the last days men would arise who would willingly, forget the story of the Flood. Furthermore, he calls such persons scoffers." It is impossible for us' in the light of these verses, to believe that Peter, in speaking of the Flood, was referring to some story he considered a fable.

What did the Son of God have to say regarding this question? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. . . . But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Without question Christ conceded the fact of the Flood, and said that as people in that day disbelieved and were lost, so at the time of His Second Coming men would refuse to believe, and thus be lost. To answer let us read Matthew 24:35-37:

THE POPULAR PRESENT-DAY THEORY

The popular scientific dogma of the present day is that no worldwide catastrophe or destruction, such as the Flood, ever takes place. Nature, it is said, works uniformly, except for more or less small capricious outbreaks, as earthquakes, violent storms, and so forth. There never was any direct creation, nor was there any sudden destructive Flood as the Bible says, according to the decree of popular science. "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"-so Peter prophesied that they would say. And that is what they are saying. They subject God to the laws of nature, which He has set in operation, and say that He can never change them. However, since the discovery of atomic explosion men are not quite so certain as they used to be that the future of man is safe in his own hands. Notwithstanding, they wish no hand of God to intervene in the laws of nature.

They are like two woodpeckers someone wrote about, which built their nest in a telegraph pole on the railroad right of way. At a certain time every day a train went by. The woodpeckers nested there season after season, and the train kept up a regular schedule. They reasoned to themselves, it is said, that that train

had gone by their home each day at a given time, and that therefore it always would.

But one day the train did not come. The next day it did not come. In fact, it never did come any more. What had happened? Simply this: The management of the railroad had decided that the line would be discontinued. What had always been and what would always be, according to woodpecker thinking, discontinued.

The God of the universe may operate a long time on a given plan, but He is not limited to that plan. The Bible represents God as sending the Flood upon the world of the ungodly in a time of overwhelming wickedness. He either did or did not. Let us look now for evidence outside the Bible!

EVIDENCE FROM OUTSIDE THE BIBLE

Here is a quotation from Francois Lenormant, once professor of archeology at the National Library of France: "The lengthy review of the subject in which we have just been engaged leaves us in a position to affirm that the account of the deluge is a universal tradition in all branches of the human family, with the sole exception of the black race. And a tradition everywhere so exact and so concordant cannot possibly be referred to as an imaginary myth. No religious or cosmogonic myth possesses this character of universality. It must necessarily be the reminiscence of an actual and terrible event, which made so powerful an impression upon the imaginations of the first parents of our species that their descendants could never forget it." - *The Beginnings of History*, pp. 486, 487.

FISHES AND THE FLOOD

In John M. MacFarlane's *Fishes the Source of Petroleum* we read: "It can be definitely said that, through all of the geologic formations in which fish remains occur, a large proportion of the remains consists of entire fishes or of sections in which every scale is still in position; every fin is extended as in life attitude. The bones of the head, though often crushed in and broken through subsequent diastrophic strains, still retain almost normal positions; while near them may be coprolites of the same or some other types of fish in a practically entire state. All of this conclusively proves that when millions of such fishes were simultaneously killed their bodies were deposited or stranded within a few hours or a few days at most after death, so that the flesh, the liver, the alimentary canal and other soft parts were unquestionably enclosed and intact, when sediment sealed them up." Page 400. Copyright, 1923. Used by permission of The Macmillan Co.

Not only do we find millions of fish, killed and buried at the same time, and so quickly as to preserve them perfectly; but frequently the deep-sea specimens of life are found buried in this fashion, mixed with shore species and land plants. It is common knowledge that the deep floor of the ocean is so calm as never to have its ooze disturbed by the most violent surface storm. Only some violent upheaval such as the Bible Flood, in which "the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up" (Genesis 7:11), would explain this mixture of the deep-sea specimens with those of shore and land, all covered and preserved by sudden destruction and burial.

FROZEN MAMMOTHS IN SIBERIA

Let us go to faraway and cold Siberia, where the ground is always frozen to a depth of a hundred feet or more-nature's refrigerator.

From this frozen depth men dig up the great Siberian mammoths, the tusks of which have been sold on the world market for a thousand years. Some of these beasts have been found with their flesh so well preserved as to be eaten by the explorers' dogs. In some instances the mammoths had undigested food in their stomachs and unchewed grass in their mouths.

It is indeed apparent that while hordes of these tropical animals were quietly feeding thousands of years ago, some mighty catastrophe overtook them, and buried them alive. And they have been preserved in cold storage to testify in these times to the truthfulness of the Bible story, and to deny the teaching of a slow, uniform procedure of nature at all times, as the modern dogma would require. The Manager of the universe sometimes does things differently.

Over an area of some ten thousand square miles the bodies of these mammoths are found. These tropical animals were thus caught in a catastrophe and frozen. James D. Dana says the climate must have

“become suddenly extreme as of a single winter’s night.” Quoted in *The Phantom of Organic Evolution*, by George McCready Price, p. 51. God warned Noah of “things not seen as yet” (Hebrews 11:7), and he believed to his salvation. God’s Word is true.

THE DINOSAURS

Take the mighty dinosaurs for another example—those giant animals, some about two hundred feet long, which roamed the Earth long ago, and now are gone. R. S. Lull says, “One of the most inexplicable of events is the dramatic extinction of this mighty race.” - *Ibid.*, p. 58. Had he believed in the Flood, the extinction would not be inexplicable. Henry Fairfield Osborn said that “the cutting off of this giant dinosaur dynasty was nearly if not quite simultaneous the world over.”-*Ibid.*, p. 59.

Great mammoths, mastodons, dinosaurs, and other antediluvian animals perished suddenly in a worldwide watery catastrophe. Their remains are still being discovered.

We read from Oliver P. Hay: “Genera and families, even orders, were wiped out of existence, and these included some of the noblest animals that have graced the face of the earth, the elephants, the mastodons, tapirs, many species of bison, horses, saber tooth cats, huge tigers, and gigantic wolves.”-*The Pleistocene of North America and Its Vertebrate Animals*, p. 5.

The simple truth is that the most reasonable explanation of these things is the Flood. Christ said, “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:37. What Noah preached the people did not believe in his day, or believing, did not act upon the belief. Today the entire account is questioned as Peter said it would be. Jesus adds these significant words: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Verse 35.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.icr.org

www.christiananswers.net

21. How to Understand the Bible

SOMEONE has said that “light travels at remarkable speed until it meets the human mind.”

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105. When this light strikes natural human minds it is ineffective, because “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them.” 2 Corinthians 4:4. How then can the darkened mind of man understand and receive the heavenly light of God’s divine Book?

There are five simple steps, five rungs to the ladder, that assuredly lead to ever-increasing understanding of the Word of God.

1. PRAY FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

Any responsible person can pray. He may not be able to read or write or even see, but he can utter a prayer, a soul cry, a heart longing for God’s light. Prayer is a simple thing, and sincere prayer is likely to be simply stated. Here is one both simple and beautiful: “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.” Psalm 43:3.

Here is the one reason why we should pray before studying the Bible. This Book was inspired by the Spirit of God, yet “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:14. Therefore we need that Spirit to enlighten us. Paul says:

“Now we have received ... the Spirit of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” Verse 12. The thing to remember is that we receive the Holy Spirit through prayer. Said Jesus:

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” Luke 11:13.

God has warned us that if we walk in the light of our own fire and the sparks of our own kindling, we shall lie down in sorrow (Isaiah 50:11). But if our blind eyes are opened, we shall with the psalmist

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“behold wondrous things out of thy law.” Psalm 119:18. “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” Ephesians 1:17.
“Holy Spirit, light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine, Chase the shades of night away, Turn my darkness into day.” - ANDREW REED

2. STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

A restless boy prowling about the house picked up a dust covered Bible. Addressing his mother, he said, “Mamma, is this God’s Book?” “Why, yes, of course,” was her quick response. “Well, then,” said the boy, I think we might as well send it back to Him. We never use it.”

Some reject the Bible. More of us just neglect it, or consider that it is a little out of date in the pressing, surging life of today. Even during the dark days of World War II only one American out of ten read the Bible daily, and forty-four out of one hundred never opened it, according to a reported Gallup poll. A writer in a popular magazine some years ago wrote:

“The Bible is not actually lost, but it is almost unknown. He is a rare person who spends much time with it. The majority of Christians are lukewarm to the Bible. . . . The world is so indifferent to it that even its enemies do not bother to criticize it. Only a few abuse it. It is just ignored. Even theological students lay it aside for other books. A recent graduate of a prominent theological seminary told me that it is not unusual to find no Bible in a student’s room.... Men and women of education and culture are in large numbers ignorant of the Bible. . . . Ask the bookseller about people who buy Bibles. One of them told me recently that people who look intelligent and talk intelligently about other matters, come in and ask for a ‘Methodist Bible,’ a ‘Baptist Bible,’ a ‘Lutheran Bible,’ an ‘Episcopal Bible.’ . . . Many Bibles are bought for ornamental purposes. They are suitable for a home supposed to be religious. A Bible looks well on a library table, and most church people would be ashamed to confess that they did not own a copy. To some people the Bible is like a horseshoe; it brings good luck.”

Many never permit any other article to be placed on top of a Bible, yet never lift a finger to open the Book that would get down to the very bottom of the greatest questions and problems of their own personal lives. What counsel does the Book offer?

“Study to show thyself approved unto God,” said Paul. 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine.” 1 Timothy 4:16.

“Man shall not live by bread alone,” said Christ. Matthew 4:4.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them.” Jeremiah 15:16.

“Seek you out of the book of the Lord, and read.” Isaiah 34:16.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding.” 2 Timothy 2:7.

Children should study the Bible. To Timothy the apostle Paul wrote, “From a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15.

How may we wisely study the Scriptures under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Paul gives us a most valuable suggestion in 1 Corinthians 2:13: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

In other words, we should compare scripture with scripture until we have what the Bible teaches on one topic. Then we may compare topic with topic. Thus we avoid drawing a wrong conclusion from the study of one text or some limited portion of the Bible. It is from the Bible, the whole Bible, that our conclusions are drawn.

Ten minutes a week provides enough reading to make a superior Bible critic. An hour a day with the Word of God may make a humble saint.

“Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life;
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of life.”

3. BE WILLING TO LEARN

There is a story of a young man who came to the famous Greek scholar Socrates, asking, “What

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shall I do to become a learned man?" Whereupon Socrates led him into a pool of water, plunged his head under, and held it there. When the youth had struggled free and got his breath, Socrates said, "When your head was under the water, what did you most wish?"

"Air," gasped the young man.

"Very well," answered the sage; "when you want knowledge as much as you wanted air when your head was under water, you will find ways to get it."

Jesus Christ chose fishermen and tax gatherers rather than priests and religious leaders for one simple reason: they were willing to learn. He who closes his eyes to truth is neighbor to him who neglects to study.

A prominent church member took his minister to task after a sermon. "But was my point not according to the teaching of Christ?" asked the preacher.

"I'm not disputing that," responded the man; "it's a point Christ made that I don't believe." A closed mind is like a jug which is corked and sealed—you cannot get anything into it.

Someone said: "If an angel brought a message containing all wisdom, few would be impressed. A great speech is one that tells us what we wish to hear and already know."

Here is counsel from a man who was willing to learn. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:2.

Looking back on his preaching at Berea, Paul wrote: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed." Acts 17:11, 12.

An open mind is a noble mind. A closed mind is another matter. "A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still."

The people of Berea were not "taken in- by every new thing that came along, but they were open-minded. They studied diligently, and many believed what they read.

"If any man seek for greatness, let him forget greatness and ask for truth, and he will find both," said the great Horace Mann.

If we do not make progress, we will go backward. Wrote the apostle Paul, "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word." Hebrews 5:12, RSV. Then with earnest appeal he wrote, "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity." Hebrews 6:1, RSV.

It seems most reasonable to suppose that in this critical hour of earth's history the Bible may have messages for us which are, as the apostle Peter put it, "present truth" (2 Peter 1:12), and as Jesus said, "meat in due season" (Matthew 24:25).

It may be that God will enlighten us through other men. "Go you, therefore, and teach all nations," commanded Christ. If there are teachers commissioned of God, there will be those to listen to their message.

He who already knows everything can learn nothing. When Paul was Saul the brilliant young Jewish prosecutor and persecutor, who thought he knew most of the answers, he was converted to Christ on the road to Damascus. Stopped in his mad war against the followers of Christ, and humbled in the dust, he said to Christ, "Lord, what wilt you have me to do?" The answer was, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." Acts 9:6. There in old Damascus he was instructed by a member of the very sect he had despised and persecuted. If we truly want to know God's way, we will accept His truth through the channel of His choosing.

Years ago a young officer of the English Navy discovered a small dangerous rock in the Mediterranean Sea, and reported it to the admiralty. All stations were immediately notified to mark the spot on all charts. An old captain was the first to sail that way, and he said, "There is no such rock. I've sailed this sea all my life. I know." So saying, he ordered the ship to be steered right over the spot under full sail. There followed a mighty crash, and the broken vessel with all hands went down. The captain knew too much, and refused to follow the chart.

"See you a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Proverbs 26:12. Conceit and pride of opinion keep the mind hidebound and creed bound, and play a man's life into the hands of that great enemy Prejudice.

Prejudice is pride gone on a spree. It is inordinate pride of opinion, race, place, politics, nation, and religion. Prejudice can get so concentrated that it even makes people proud of their prejudices.

Says a man, "Just so. I'm against these prejudiced people. There are a lot of them around here." It

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is a good thing for every man to remember that he who thinks himself to have no prejudices is living under as great a delusion as ever overshadowed a human soul. To break the bonds that bind the minds of men is more difficult than to loose the fetters that chain the feet of slaves.

Of all prejudices religious prejudice is probably more widespread, deeper dyed, and more devastating to the development of the human soul, than any other. There is but one adequate way to deal with it, and that is to call it sin. Let a man daily pray, "Lord, this one day save me, deliver me, from the sin of prejudice. Keep my soul filled with the love and the grace and the power of God, and my eyes open to light."

If we are to understand God's great Book, the Bible, we shall, sincerely pray, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path." Psalm 27:11.

When the Pilgrims were about to set sail for America, where they might be further removed from the chains of religious prejudice and tyranny, their pastor, John Robinson, spoke to them these noble words:

"For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed churches, who are to come to a period of religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw, . . . and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received." - DANIEL NEAL, *History of the Puritans* (1848), vol. 1, pp. 269, 270.

"Remember your church covenant, in which you have agreed to walk in all the ways of the Lord, made or to be made known unto you. Remember your promise and covenant with God and with one another to receive whatever light and truth shall be made known to you from his written word."-W. CARLOS MARTYN, *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England* (1867), pp. 70, 71. (Italics supplied.)

4. BE WILLING TO UNLEARN

To be wholeheartedly willing to unlearn, to give up an idea we have long held, is doubly difficult. It is like getting a horse to back a heavy load up a hill.

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. Our fathers believed the world was flat and that tomatoes were poisonous. It took them a long time to change their minds. Some never did.

More than three hundred years ago a seventeen-year-old boy sat in an Italian cathedral so intent on watching a lamp accidentally set swinging on its long chain that he forgot about prayers. This young Galileo began working on the idea of weights and gravitation, and delved deeper and deeper into the broad fields of physics, astronomy, and dynamics.

From the top of the famous leaning tower of Pisa he dropped a large and a small weight, and demonstrated that they fell at the same rate of speed. The philosophers saw it, but they refused to part with their prejudice. They chose to cling to the ideas of Aristotle, who told people two thousand years before that the heavier weight would fall faster.

Galileo taught that the earth was not the center of everything, and that the whole universe was in motion. Bruno had taught the same thing a few years previous to Galileo, and church leaders saw that he was burned at the stake.

Galileo invented a telescope that made objects seem thirty three times nearer, and it helped him prove that the earth moves. But philosophers who could not give up an idea, especially when it was dangerous to do so, joined with church leaders of the Vatican and forbade him to teach this truth. For sixteen years he kept still. Then he began to write. The pope and philosophers got together, summoned the ailing old man to Rome, where the church cardinals examined him. After being held four months, in order to be released he agreed that the earth does not move. But it is said that as he departed he whispered under his breath, "She moves."

It takes more grit and grace of character to give up a popular idea long believed than to accept one that is brand new. Yet what could be more foolish than slavishly to believe that what others think is necessarily right for us to believe? And what could be more wise than to exchange error for truth? If you are one of those who can consistently and persistently do this, you are one of the select, one of the "elect."

Here is scriptural light and suggestion: "What is the chaff to the wheat? said the Lord." Jeremiah 23:28. "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.

God Speaks To Modern Man

From these Old Testament appeals to choose wheat rather than chaff, and light instead of darkness, we turn to these significant statements of Jesus from the New Testament: “You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.” And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your own tradition!” Mark 7:8, 9, RSV. Jesus here employs a bit of irony, as if to say, “That is a fine way to do, isn’t it? You believe in God. You make a high profession. But you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your own tradition!” Christ hoped to bring into their hearts some sense of shame, that they might turn away from error and accept the truth that would make them free (John 8:32).

5. BE WILLING TO OBEY

The fifth and final rung of the ladder to Bible learning is willingness to obey. If we will pray for guidance, study diligently, be willing to learn, to unlearn, and to obey, then, and then only, is God responsible for our guidance.

Note carefully these words of Christ in John 7:17. They were spoken at the feast at Jerusalem amid much discussion among the crowds as to whether He was good or bad, of God or of the devil:

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” The Revised Standard Version makes it very clear: “If any man’s will is to do his [God’s] will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.”

How simple! How fair! Through His Son God says: “If you will choose to follow Me, I will show you the way. If your first purpose is to do My will, I will make clear to you whether a doctrine is true or false.” Nothing in all this wide world can take the place of absolute honesty with God.

Jesus made this clear in the great parable where He is the sower, the Word of God is the seed, and the human heart is the soil. He described the unsatisfactory results of the Word of God on hard hearts that would not accept it; in shallow, changeable hearts which were merely emotional and dominated by feeling; and in worldly hearts overcome with cares and riches and pleasures. Then He spoke of the successful Christian in these words:

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” Luke 8:15.

Diogenes, of ancient Greece, is reported to have gone about day or night carrying a lantern and looking for an honest man. So the Holy Spirit of God searches the highways and habitations of men today looking for the honest in heart whose purpose is to know the will of God, that by His grace they may do it. This fifth step of willingness to obey is the climax. It proves our sincerity in taking the four preceding steps. When Jesus called Matthew as he sat in the tax gatherer’s booth, He said, “Follow me.” What did Matthew do? “He arose, and followed him.” Matthew 9:9.

That is what it takes—no more, no less. To us He calls, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24.

Christ had His cross. We have ours. The apostle Paul gloried in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14). He also gloried in tribulation (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Christ was obedient unto death (Philippians 2:8). Paul was faithful unto death (2 Timothy 4:6-8). “Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10.

The way of obedience is the way of learning. “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.” Psalm 119:99, 100.

22. Christ Forever

BRUCE BARTON wrote a book about Jesus Christ, calling it *The Man Nobody Knows*. Many claims have been made for and against Christ. Millions of words have been spoken about Him. An almost endless chain of books link His day and His life with ours.

Napoleon Bonaparte pointed out that he and Julius Caesar had founded kingdoms upon force, which had been destroyed by force. In contrast, he said that Jesus founded a kingdom upon love, and millions of His followers would die for Him. A Nazi youth said, “Hitler is so big, and Jesus Christ seems so