

THE BIBLE

COLLECTED PERIODICAL ARTICLES

E. J. WAGGONER

FRAGMENTS – VOLUME 6

Source:

Signs of the Times
Present Truth

Cover:

Monastery of the Holy Trinity, Meteora
Greece, Eastern Orthodox, Completed: 1476



Fonts:

Liberation Sans Narrow
Liberation Serif
Linux Biolinum
Linux Libertine



August 2026
practicaprophetica.com
srac.info

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About the “Fragments” Series

THE *Fragments* series is composed of 12 books of articles, gathered from the various Periodicals which E. J. Waggoner contributed to during his lifetime. There is a separate and parallel series devoted to the writings of Waggoner’s companion in the gospel, A. T. Jones.

In order to bring some cohesion to these articles, the books are topical: that is, articles are organized according to their topic, and there is a separate book for each topic, as follows:

1. Grace Greater Than Sin [The Gospel]
2. Healing and Temperance
3. Life, Death, and Spiritualism [Non-Immortality]
4. Money and Work
5. Religious Liberty
6. The Bible
7. The Church
8. The Holy Spirit
9. The Law and the Sabbath
10. The Name [Character] of God
11. The Prophetic Word
12. Thoughts on Education

Most often, the articles within each volume are grouped by the year of publication, or if one year had few articles, sometimes the group includes a range of years. In other cases, the articles are grouped by topic. In still other cases, there was sometimes a mini-series that continued through a few periodical issues, and those were grouped accordingly.

While trying to make this as complete a collection as possible, at times I have not included some smaller articles that carried only local news or material that would not be relevant to our time. Even at that, the amount of included material is quite vast.

In most cases, I have left out articles that already appear in other books. For example, often Waggoner would write articles, and then later publish them as a book. Since these books are available separately on our website, I did not see the need to duplicate this material.

Also, some articles crossed over many topics. For example, an article on the Sabbath could fit into the “Law and Sabbath” book, but it might also cover “Religious Liberty,” “The Gospel,” and even “The Prophetic Word.” I tried to fit these kinds of articles into the book that most matched its topic, or where there were a series of articles to which it belonged. Occasionally an article is included in more than one volume.

Due to the great amount of material that came from the pen of Waggoner, I’ve also added a few more volumes for his writings:

- All About Jesus, volume 1 & 2
- Paul and the Early Church
- Christ Our Life
- Gleanings from the Psalms
- Leaves from the Tree of Life
- Reflections on Proverbs
- The Call of Abraham
- The Law and the Gospel
- The Lord’s Prayer
- The Miracles of Jesus
- Questions and Answers on the Bible
- Gospel Lessons in the Old Testament (Waggoner & Jones)

There are also two companion volumes, one each from Jones and Waggoner, on the topic of the Papacy:

- The Light Shines in Darkness (Jones)
- The Great Falling Away (Waggoner)

What these books demonstrate is that E. J. Waggoner produced a lot of precious material, much of which was never organized or reprinted after his death. Jesus taught us to...

John 6

¹² Gather the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

¹³ Therefore they gathered them together, and filled *twelve baskets with the fragments*.



Since much depends on how we receive and appreciate the light that God gives through His chosen messengers, I felt a burden to put these forgotten treasures into an orderly and easily accessible format. May the Spirit that gave them, bless you as you read His words!

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

*"If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward,
in appreciation of the divine gifts,
a flood of healing virtue would pour in."*

Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, p. 116

About This Volume

THIS volume, the sixth in the collection of “Fragments,” is devoted to articles dealing with the Word of God: the Bible. These articles deal with such topics as the inspiration of the Word, its accuracy, its literature, its practical usefulness and living power, and some of the vain attempts made to cast doubt upon it.

I have not included articles dealing with the Bible in education, as those are included in the last volume of the Fragments series, “Thoughts on Education.”

There is no doubt that we live in a time when the Bible is under assault as never before, especially through the widespread indoctrination of atheistic scientific theories. There are few, even among professed Christians, who still believe in the literal *Genesis* record, that God actually created the Earth in six days, and rested the seventh day. We are, in all respects, in a time very similar to the times of Noah just prior to the flood.

Through the harnessing of the powers of nature, mankind is putting their whole confidence and trust into what the ingenuity of man can accomplish. But the moral condition of man has not advanced one bit from the earliest times of recorded history. It is this moral condition that the Bible especially addresses, and which all the harnessed powers of nature are absolutely helpless to change.

The creative Word is the one force in this world, that promises to renovate man’s inner nature, and without this renovation, giving man more external power is like giving a child dynamite to play with.

It is not surprising that the 1888 messengers devoted some effort to strengthening confidence in the Bible as God’s inspired Word. Since the core of their message was the righteousness of Christ applied to the hearts of men, and this to be done by faith in the Word, it would be impossible for this righteousness to be re-

ceived if there was not the appropriate faith within the human recipient. And since...

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,

—it is obvious that without confidence in the word of God, there can be no true faith; and without true faith, there can be no salvation from sin.

The fall of man started with disbelief in God's word, and the restoration of man will come through restored faith in God's word. Not surprisingly then, the Bible testifies of the final generation before Christ's return:

Revelation 14

¹² Here are they that keep the commandments of God, *and the faith of Jesus.*

Abraham, the father of the faithful, simply believed that...

Romans 4

²¹ ...what God had promised, He was able to perform.

God's promises are in His Word, still waiting for the same faith today, to grasp the same power that Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus, grasped in their day, and found able to meet their greatest need and want.

The Desire of Ages, p. 823:

The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?

1 Peter 1

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Psalms 138

² I will worship toward your holy temple, and praise your name for your lovingkindness and for your truth: for You have magnified your word above all your name.



William Tyndale, translator of the Bible into English.

(Pilgrim's Progress, vol. 1, 1847)

One one side of the portrait is represented the Pope & Satan striving to extinguish the light. On the other side, the burning of some New Testaments while many are represented as flying about.

(Rhyme on the left)

Out! out! you hated light,
Shine not on our dark night
Of mysteries and charms.
Our craft will soon be naught,
If man your light is taught,
All Hell is in alarms.

(Rhyme on the right)

The devilish imps did strive to have
For the Holy Book, a burning grave.
But all their trouble was in vain,
God multiplied it quick again.
The Pope & Devil are scared and wondered,
Their gold burns one, but makes a hundred.

"In burning the New Testament, they did none other thing than that I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also; if it be God's will, it shall so be." (Wm. Tyndale, *Exposition of the Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528), in which he predicted his death, which took place on October 6, 1536, at the age of 42.)

1881–1888

The Anvil of God's Word

Last eve I paused beside the 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, I thought, 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.

—Attributed to John Clifford



A bulky pile, and yet of what avail?
One Book of greater worth brings down the scale.

1. Was the Bible Inspired?

Signs of the Times, July 28, 1881¹

A FEW years ago, anyone who manifested any doubt as to the Inspiration of the whole of the Bible, would have been set down at once as an infidel. Now, however, professed Christians and ministers in good standing and high repute, not only express doubts, but openly avow their disbelief in the inspiration of different positions of the Bible. This, although as deserving of the name “infidelity” as ever, is termed “liberality,” and is extolled as a product of the advanced thought of the nineteenth century.

The following, from the *Christian Union*, in answer to the question,

“Do you believe the account of the creation and the fall of man, as given in the Bible?”

—is a very fair specimen of what may be termed “religious infidelity”:

There is no claim made by Moses, and none made for him by any other writer in the Bible, that the account of the creation and the fall of man, as given in the first chapters of *Genesis*, was a revelation from God to Moses. In the absence of any such claim, we see no reason why the church or the theologian should make it for him. The presumption is that he obtained his facts as other historians obtain theirs; that is, that his history of the events prior to his own time was compiled from an acquaintance with the traditions of his age, and this presumption is confirmed by parallel and analogous traditions recently discovered in other very ancient Assyrian writers. The essential truths in the first chapters of *Genesis* are the religious truths, and these are unaffected by the question whether the story is to be regarded as purely historical or partially allegorical and parabolic.

¹ PP Editor’s note: The date was listed as July 15, 1881 in the *Advent Pioneer Library*; this is incorrect. It is July 28.

To prove that it is no injustice to call such teaching as this infidelity, it will be necessary to show that it really strikes at the whole Bible. This is the case, as can easily be shown.

There are only two ways in which Moses could have received the account of the creation and the fall of man, as recorded in *Genesis*, chapters 1-3. One is by revelation from God, the other is the way suggested above, namely, by tradition. Now if the latter is the case, the credibility of all of Moses' writings is destroyed, for no one will place any confidence in an author's narrative, if he himself should give evidence of his credulity on the very start, by telling as a fact what is manifestly absurd. There is nothing in the narrative to lead one to suppose that Moses had any doubts as to its authenticity. The account of the exodus of the children of Israel which occurred under Moses' direct supervision, is in no more positive terms than is the history of the creation. If this be not true, then the whole of *Genesis* is discredited, for Moses knew nothing of the events personally.

Supposing then, with the *Christian Union*, that Moses was deceived, and that what he wrote as facts never occurred, what effect does it have on the rest of the Bible?

The ten commandments are universally recognized by Christians as embodying all the principles of right, as the foundation of all law, and as emanating from God himself. The Bible teaches this. Now the fourth commandment depends entirely upon the narrative of creation as recorded in *Genesis*. It is just as reliable as the 1st chapter of *Genesis* and no more so. The author of the one must be the author of the other. The only reason given for its observance is that...

Exodus 20

¹¹ In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.

If God is the author of the fourth commandment, then the reliability of the Mosaic account of creation is attested; and, on the contrary, if the 1st and 2nd chapters of *Genesis* are *not* true, then

the fourth commandment, and all the other commandments are a forgery, for they purport to come from God himself. Thus we see that not only the reliability of Moses' writings, but also the whole system of morality and religion, depends on the correctness of the Scripture record of creation.

Of course, then, none of Moses' writings can be accepted, for whether we say that Moses was himself deceived, or that he willfully deceived others, he would manifestly be an unsafe guide.

But let us go still farther. Throughout the Bible we have continual reference to the books of Moses either as a whole or in part. We will notice only a few, for they are almost innumerable. In *2 Chronicles*, in *Nehemiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel*, especially, we have it stated that God brought calamities upon the Jews for their violation of the Sabbath. *Nehemiah* states expressly that God spoke through Moses.

Nehemiah 9

¹³ You came down also upon mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:

¹⁴ And made known unto them your holy sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant.

In the *Psalms*, the references to the law are in nearly every chapter, the 19th and 119th being especially prominent instances.

Psalms 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

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

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Psalm 119

⁹ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to your word.

⁸⁹ For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

⁹⁰ Your faithfulness is unto all generations: You have established the earth, and it abides.

⁹¹ They continue this day according to your ordinances: for all are your servants.

⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers: for your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the ancients, because I keep your precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep your word.

¹⁰³ How sweet are your words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ Through your precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.

¹⁴⁰ Your word is very pure: therefore your servant loves it.

¹⁶⁰ Your word is true from the beginning: and every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever.

The 8th, 33rd, and 136th *Psalms* make special mention of the creation as given in *Genesis*.

Psalm 8

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

⁴ What is man, that You are mindful of him? and the son of man, that You visit him?

⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet:

⁷ All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

⁸ The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas.

⁹ O Lord our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap: He lays up the depth in storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Psalm 136

⁵ To Him that by wisdom made the heavens: for His mercy endures for ever.

⁶ To Him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for His mercy endures for ever.

⁷ To Him that made great lights: for His mercy endures for ever:

⁸ The sun to rule by day: for His mercy endures for ever:

⁹ The moon and stars to rule by night: for His mercy endures for ever.

In short, it is an undisputed fact that all the Old Testament writers placed implicit confidence in the writings of Moses. But if Moses, through lack of inspiration, fell into error, and recorded absurdities, none of the writers who quote him, or base arguments on his statements, can have been inspired. Had God prompted them in their utterances, he would not have allowed them to follow one who willfully deceived, or wrote from mere hearsay. Therefore we must place a large portion if not the whole of the Old Testament in the same category with the writings of Moses.

But this is not the only result of discrediting Moses' writings. The New Testament writers make frequent references to Moses, and all quote him as authority. Paul quotes him more than any other, and in his *Second Epistle to Timothy* he commended him for his knowledge of the Scriptures, said they were able to make him

wise unto salvation, and actually claimed that they were given by inspiration of God.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ But continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them;

¹⁵ And that 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.

¹⁶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Old Testament Scriptures are here referred to, for none of the New had been written when Timothy was a child. Paul also makes special mention of the fall of man, showing that he believed it implicitly.

Romans 5

¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

¹³ For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

⁴⁵ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

1 Timothy 2

¹³ For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Of course, then, Paul derived his knowledge from the same sources that other historians did theirs, namely, tradition. But above all, Jesus Christ himself testifies as to the validity of Moses' writings, for in *Luke* 16 he says that "Moses and the prophets" are sufficient, if heeded, to keep one from eternal destruction.

Luke 16

²⁹ Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

And in *John* 5:45-47 He makes the faith of the Jews in Moses a test of their belief in Him.

John 5

⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust.

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

Certainly the testimony of Christ should at once dispel every doubt from the heart or head of a professed Christian.

Those, therefore, who disbelieve the Mosaic account of the creation, must necessarily take one of two positions, as follows:

1. Moses was an honest but extremely credulous man, who accepted all tradition as truth, without raising a question in regard to it, and the other writers of the Bible, equally simple-minded, followed him blindly; or,
2. Moses was an imposter like Mohammed, who willfully deceived the people for his own selfish purposes, and all the other Bible writers, and Christ himself, leagued together to perpetrate the imposition.

The first is highly improbable, the second absolutely impossible, and both are blasphemous.

One important step in our investigation is now reached, and that is, that the whole Bible is so closely linked together that if a part of it is false, the whole is unreliable, and if a part is given by inspiration of God, the whole is likewise a revelation from the same source.

It must not be supposed that those, at least many of them, who thus lightly esteem the writings of Moses, realize what important consequences their position involves. It would be well for them to consider whether or not they are willing to throw away the whole Bible.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

Deuteronomy 4

² You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

2. Visit to Healdsburg

Signs of the Times, May 10, 1883

THE meeting at this place was in many respects one of the most important that has ever been held in the State. Many advanced steps were taken; and the plans adopted, if properly carried out, cannot fail to have an influence on the cause for good, until the close of time. These things will appear more fully in the official reports of the business meetings, and in special report. We design to simply speak of the general features of the meeting, and give some items in regard to the work here, in which all our people on the coast have, or should have, an interest.

Friday afternoon was devoted to a meeting of the stockholders of the College. On entering the building we were struck with the floral decorations of the school-room. The busy hands of students had been at work, and the doors, chandeliers, rostrum, organ, and clock had been neatly ornamented with roses and evergreens. We are pleased with this, not so much for the decoration itself, as for the evidence it afforded that the students have a love for the school-room, which can only come from a love of the studies there pursued.

The favorable impression thus received was deepened by a brief visit to the school on Monday. About ninety students were present, and quiet study seemed to be the order of the day. The professors have naturally felt a little discouragement because as yet there are no students in the higher branches; but we could see no reason for discouragement. The recitations showed that the students have already received a discipline of mind that will not readily be lost; they are forming correct habits of study, which is the essential thing. These things would be more readily noticed by a visitor than by one closely connected with the school.

We can most heartily recommend the Healdsburg College; and we feel assured that the improvements and contemplation by the

professors, who are devoted to the work, will add a hundred-fold to its usefulness. Opportunities for mental and spiritual culture are here afforded, which it would be a sin for our people to neglect.

The Sabbath-School

We were much pleased to note the interest manifested in the Sabbath-school. This is now the second school in size in the State, and with the influx of students will doubtless soon be the first. The school will be, from the nature of the case, the most important school in the State. An increase in numbers will bring increased responsibility in far greater measure than in ordinary cases, for as the students go to their homes, the influence of the school will be felt on all the schools on the coast. We believe that the officers of the school realize this responsibility, and will do all in their power to make the school what should be. We hope that all who attend will second their efforts.

There has been a vast improvement in this school since we were there last. The organization of the school is good, and there seemed to be a feeling of harmony present. At the teachers' meeting Monday evening twenty-one of the twenty-five teachers were present, and a good degree of interest was manifested. So long as an interest is kept up in the teachers' meeting the school cannot fail to prosper. But it should not be forgotten that united prayer is one great object of this meeting.

There is but one thing now lacking, and that, unfortunately, is not peculiar to the school. The same lack exists in Oakland, and we believe it exists in all our schools, and among our people generally. There is a lack of appreciation of the importance of the Sabbath-school work as supporting discipline of mind and a thorough education, in the things of God. There is a lack of thoroughness in Bible study. The Sabbath-school has been regarded as different from the day-school, and that it was not expected that the lesson should be learned *perfectly*. There has been such an apparent fear of formalism, and a desire to be able to generalize and

state things in our own language, that we have neglected that accurate knowledge of the Bible which alone can enable us to generalize. The particular is before the general. Before we venture to state a Bible event or truth in our own words, we must be familiar with the words of the sacred text; then, if necessary we can paraphrase. But the instances where it is necessary or proper to change the expression in the least, in order to convey its exact meaning, are more rare than is commonly supposed.

This thoroughness of work depends on the individual members of the schools. The officers and teachers cannot demand a perfect recitation, as they would in ordinary schools, however much they may desire the result; but if each member of the school will realize the importance of being able to think and talk in the language of the Bible, especially in these last days, our schools will be improved a thousand-fold.

The Final Atonement

The sermons during the meetings were by Elder Haskell, Elder Waggoner, and Sister White. They were all of a practical nature, designed to show us the necessities of our present position. Sister White's two sermons were mainly on the subject of the atonement, especially Christ's closing work in the heavenly sanctuary. Christ will soon cease His pleading, and probation will close for all mankind. We know not how soon our individual cases may come up for decision. As on the typical day of atonement the people were to afflict their souls, so in this most important time, there should be an absence of lightness and frivolity, and, in their stead, the searching of heart and entire consecration to the work. The cause of God is all-important, and we should learn to attend to its once in preference to our own work or pleasure.

Clothed with Humility

Elder Waggoner spoke Sabbath afternoon from the 5th chapter of Peter's first epistle. We are commanded to be sober and vigilant, because the devil as a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour. The inference is plain that those who are not thus

watchful will be devoured. We are helped in this by casting all our care on God, who cares for us. Too often we feel great confidence in God in times of comparative safety, but foolishly attempt to care for ourselves when we see trouble and danger. He dwelt much on the text,

1 Peter 5

⁵ Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.

A failure to comply with this injunction is because of all the church difficulties that exist. Many persons quit the service of God because of some grievance, oftener imaginary than real, which they have received from their brethren. The wickedness and absurdity of such a course was vividly illustrated as follows:

“I have a father who is kind and loving, lavishing on me every gift that heart could desire. Nothing that is good is withheld from me. He studies my needs, and anticipates my slightest want. But I have a brother who is selfish, and who slights and even abuses me, contrary to my father’s will. Now because of this petty slight from my brother, I will turn my good father out of doors, and refuse to have anything more to do with him!”

We believe that many made a profitable application of this sermon to themselves.

The Waldenses

Friday afternoon Elder Haskell spoke briefly of the Waldenses, whom he visited on his recent trip to Europe. He spoke of the persecutions which they had suffered for their unswerving devotion to the truth of the Bible. Their children were instructed from the Bible, and were taught to love it. The Bible was their textbook, and their characters were molded by it. The result is seen in their descendants, who are characterized by a sturdy simplicity and uprightness that is in marked contrast to the morality that prevails in Southern Italy, where Catholicism has borne sway, and the Bible is almost an unknown book. These people are all ready to receive the whole truth of God, but where are the men who

have the knowledge, the missionary zeal, and enough of the Spirit of sacrifice to go and instruct them in the way of life? A strong appeal was made, and both speaker and congregation were deeply affected. His sermon Sunday morning was on the subject of faith applied especially to labor in the cause of God.

These plain testimonies and earnest appeals were not without effect. As one brother remarked,

“Anyone who could go through these meetings and not be stirred with a desire to labor in God’s cause, is in a hard case.”

Eight or ten students volunteered to spend their vacation in the missionary field, in active service. With most of them this is their first attempt. Others, who are not able to go into the field, will engage in the work at home.

If the students spend their vacation in earnest, conscientious labor, they will not only be a great blessing to the cause in this State, but their own souls will be watered, and they will enter upon the work of the next college year with clearer minds and enlarged ideas, much better prepared than now to profit by the instruction which they will receive. We hope to soon see the number of earnest missionary workers who shall go out from the college largely increased.

3. Advantages of Bible Study

Signs of the Times, May 17, 1883

Original title: The Sabbath-School. Advantages of Bible Study

ONE great benefit to be derived from the study of the Bible is mentioned by Paul, when he says:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ 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.

This is why the Bible was given. It is the revelation of God's will to man. Nowhere else can man learn his duty to God and his fellow-men. Those nations that have not the Bible are sunk in degradation and crime. In ancient Greece and Rome, although there was culture and wisdom of a certain kind, which are the admiration of the world today, the greatest crimes were openly committed, and even protected by the laws. There is nothing that will teach men what they ought to do in order to live happily and peaceably here, and worthy of a life hereafter, except the Bible.

And the Bible is a complete rule of faith. As Paul further says,

¹⁶ [It] is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished* unto all good works.

It contains, then, all that is absolutely necessary to be understood by mankind. A little thought will convince anyone that this is so. All will agree, in answer to our Saviour's question, that it will profit a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his soul.² All the wealth, honor, and wisdom that this world affords, cannot for a moment be compared with that which eternity offers. A man may have all that this world can give, yet if he is not...

² Matthew 16:26.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...wise unto salvation,

–he loses it all, and is as though he had never acquired anything. But though he be destitute of worldly riches, and ignorant of the things which the world calls wisdom, if he only has the...

James 3

¹⁷ ...wisdom that comes from above,

–he will finally be admitted into “a better country,”³ where, with unclouded intellect, and the angels of God for teachers, he can in a few years learn more than his unbelieving neighbor did in a lifetime. And then he has a whole eternity before him, in which to explore new fields, and increase in knowledge.

It is only through the Bible that we learn of Christ, without whom we cannot hope for eternal life. The Bible is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works, and guides us into the ways of truth and knowledge. It is the Bible alone that teaches us the fear of God, which the wise man tells us is the beginning, or rather, the principal part, of knowledge.⁴ Surely, then, the Bible, of all books, is the one that should be the most studied. The only reason why we study it so little, is because we underestimate...

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ ...the things that God has prepared for them that love Him,

–and which can be gained only by careful study of, and obedience to, His word; we appreciate the things that we see, more than those which are unseen. If we could obtain a glimpse of the glories of Heaven, I believe we would take the course necessary to gain it, even at the expense of everything else.

But this is not all the benefit we gain from the study of the Bible. We do not mean that anything more or better can be gained than that of which we have just spoken, but that we do not have

³ Hebrews 11:16.

⁴ Proverbs 1:7.

to wait till we get to Heaven, before we begin to reap the benefit of Bible study. The apostle Paul says of godliness that it...

1 Timothy 4

⁸ ...is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

So the Bible, besides showing us the way to eternal life, gives wisdom and a culture that can be obtained from no other book in the world. The psalmist says:

Psalms 111

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a *good understanding* have all they that do His commandments.

This also is susceptible to proof, as we shall show.

What is education? It is simply the development of the mind. Webster says:

Education is properly to draw forth, and implies not so much the communication of knowledge, as the discipline of the intellect, the establishment of the principles, and the regulation of the heart.

To educate is:

...to lead out and train the mental powers.

According to this, any one can get a thorough education from the Bible alone. Children go to school, and men go to college, not for the few facts that they may learn, but for that development of mind that will enable them to think correctly, and to reason soundly, and to judge correctly of things. In order to gain this, years are spent in the study of what is called the classics—the productions of the great minds of earth. By closely studying these models, the student almost unconsciously makes them his own. By unraveling the deep sayings of the wise men, he becomes able to think deeply for himself. By daily reading the writings of the best authors, he learns how to use language, and acquires a good style of expression. Continued application increases his ability to

receive ideas and make them his own, and to think for himself; it expands his mind; in other words he is educated. A man who has the will to apply himself in this manner may become as truly educated as though he had every advantage of the schools.

But will the study of the Bible furnish this culture of mind? It certainly will, and more. Let us reason upon it. Sin has brought disease and death into the world, and causes not only physical ailments, but mental weakness. Mankind has degenerated mentally as well as physically. The men from whose writings thousands gain their mental discipline, were weakened mortals. They were subject to the curse. Although we speak of them as having “giant intellects,” they were dwarfs beside what they would have been had their ancestors never transgressed moral or physical laws. Many of them were themselves wicked men, men who were slaves to their appetites and passions. And yet from these men the culture of the world is derived.

Now consider the Bible. It was not written by sinful men, but...

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

God is the source of all knowledge. These men of whom we have spoken were dependent upon God even for the mind with which they acquired their wisdom. Now is it possible that we can obtain more education from them than from the Fountain-head? Most assuredly not. Peter says that the Spirit of Christ was in the men who wrote the Bible, and that even angels desire to look into the things that were revealed to them. Surely, the Bible contains enough to draw out the mind of man to an unlimited extent. We repeat, then, without any fear of successful contradiction, that if a man were to study no other book but the Bible, and would apply himself to it as closely as men do to their ordinary studies, he

would have a discipline of mind far greater than those would have who took the ordinary course of study.

In the Bible we have many varieties of style, as the Spirit worked through different minds.

- A complete code of laws is open to the student. All human laws are derived from this source.
- If we wish to develop the reasoning faculties, Paul's epistles afford an ample field.
- If we wish to cultivate the memory, there is an abundance of history for us to learn.

In short, whatever we desire in the line of knowledge may be found in the Book of books. This mental culture is not the primary object of studying the word of God. The Bible was given that we might learn God's will; but in studying to learn that which is of the greatest importance, we necessarily acquire that for which so many in the world strive, often in vain. And thus it is that God withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly.⁵ If we seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, all things necessary will be added unto us.⁶ We serve ourselves best by serving God.

Let no one, then, complain of meager opportunities, or waste of time in vainly wishing for knowledge. If we wish to obtain treasures we must dig for them. All have the Bible. It is God's gift to man. It was not designed for a few favored ones, but for all. Its pages are open to all. And here the unlearned man may be on a level with his more favored neighbor, if he only has sincere love for its Author; for...

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.

And help is given that the ordinary student knows nothing of.

⁵ *Psalm* 84:11.

⁶ *Matthew* 6:33.

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

In conclusion, it is not merely our privileged to avail ourselves of the wisdom and a culture which the Bible affords, but it is an imperative duty. We are commanded to...

John 5

³⁹ ...search the Scriptures.

Every individual must arm himself with...

Ephesians 6

¹⁷ ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And this is the object of the Sabbath-school,—to educate us in the things of God. The lessons given us there to study, form a nucleus around which we may gather vast stores of Biblical knowledge. How many are there who think that the Sabbath-school as well as the day school affords opportunity for mental training? There are possibilities in the Sabbath-school of which few of us have even dreamed. May God help us to avail ourselves of them in so faithful a manner that they will not condemn us in the final day of accounts.

4. How to Study the Bible

Signs of the Times, May 31, 1883

WE HAVE already spoken of the benefits to be derived from Bible study; that by it we not only gain a knowledge of our duty, but strengthen the intellect. We believe that this matter can scarcely be put in too strong a light. The Bible is not appreciated by any of us as it should be, and the reason why it is not is because it is not studied. It is a wonderful book. But a casual glance at the Bible, or the reading of one, two, or even five chapters a day, in a mechanical manner will not give us the insight into the Bible that we should have. It is not the quantity of ground that we cover in our reading, but the manner in which we do it, that makes us Bible students. Now the Bible itself tells us just how we should study it. In *Deuteronomy* 6:5-9 we have directions as to our duty in regard to the Bible. We will quote it in full:

Deuteronomy 6

⁵ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

⁶ And these words which I command you this day, shall be in your heart:

⁷ And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

⁸ And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

⁹ And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.

This is a complete model for Bible study. It was not intended to be local, for the Jews merely but is for all persons, in all time. Not that we are to wear phylacteries as the Jews did; this passage does not command that. The first part explains the last. The word of God is to be studied and meditated upon so much that it will have a controlling influence over every act that our hands perform. We should work so that all that we do will bear the impress of the

word. Thus it will be for a sign upon our hands. In like manner the forehead stands for the mind, which is to be stored with the truths of God's word. They are ever to be before our eyes. But we wish to call a special attention to the 6th and 7th verses. We are commanded to talk of the word when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise up. Now how can this be done? Must we carry a Bible with us continually? That would be very inconvenient, and almost impossible. We could not use it while we were at work, nor in the night. The previous expression explains the whole thing:

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ And the words, which I command you this day, shall be *in your heart*.

That is the secret of Bible knowledge. The Bible must be read so carefully that the words will be indelibly fixed in our mind. Then we can meditate upon them wherever we are, or whatever we are doing.

It used to be the custom to learn portions of the Bible "by heart," as it was called. Unfortunately it is one of the good practices that is going out of date. People are afraid of being formal. They are so afraid of having a mere intellectual knowledge of the Bible, that they run the risk of having no knowledge at all. We may make the study of the Scriptures a mechanical act, whatever way we study them, but committing portions of it to memory is no more liable to be a mechanical act than simply reading it.

And even if we do not sit down with the express purpose of learning a certain portion, if we read the Bible as much as we ought, and give earnest, prayerful heed to that which we read, it will become fixed in our minds almost unconsciously. And who can estimate the good that would result from such a course? The Bible becomes our constant companion. We can meditate upon the word wherever we are. And by thinking upon it, and having our minds filled with it, evil thoughts will be crowded out. It is like being in the company of pure and good men. Such company

molds us; we become like the company that we keep. If we have the Bible for our constant companion, as we may have, our characters will be molded by it. The Spirit of the Lord can then the more easily make impressions on our hearts, for it works through the word. And we cannot be influenced by the Bible unless we do make it our own, and become permeated by it. Nothing will atone for neglect of God's word. Shall we not, then, *search* the Scriptures, instead of hastily running through them?



5. The Policy of Romanism

Signs of the Times, July 19, 1883

IT IS doubtless well known that the American Bible Society and the Baptists are not in harmony; that the Baptists circulate the Scriptures by means of their own organizations, instead cooperating with the society. The cause of the disagreement is this: The only Bible in the Burmese language is that translated by Judson, and the American Bible Society, which professes to be undenominational, refuses to circulate this Bible, because the word “baptize” is rendered by a Burmese word signifying “immerse.” Of course the Baptists were left with no alternative but to do their own distributing.

The *Christian Union*, commenting editorially on this affair, regrets the action taken by the American Bible Society, and says that it is plainly in the wrong. It thinks that the society should do all in its power to bring about a union, and should circulate the version which it now rejects. The following paragraph in this article states the case clearly, and makes an important admission:

There is a scholarly, an acceptable, an actually accepted version of Scripture in the language of the Burmese. This version is without competition, present or prospective. It is *the* Burmese Bible. At least for an indefinite time to come. The Burmese depend on it, on it alone, for their knowledge of the word of God. Such, on one side, is the state of the facts. But this Burmese version of Scripture renders the Greek word “baptize,” with its cognates, by a vernacular equivalent meaning “immerse.” No competent scholar will assert that this is a scholarly rendering of the Greek original. This rendering, however, compels the Christian missionaries who do not practice immersion, and who, of course, do not teach immersion, to explain the terms involved. There is for such missionaries an obvious disadvantage in this. Still, in spite of the disadvantage, missionaries not Baptists do, as a matter of fact, use this version, making the necessary explanation.

It is generally admitted that no man was better qualified to make a scholarly translation of the Bible than Dr. Judson: In translating the Scriptures into the Burmese language, he rendered “baptize” by a word meaning “immerse,” not on account of theological bias, but because as a scholar he could not do otherwise. Educated as a Presbyterian, all his prejudices were against the Baptists. On his voyage to India he employed his leisure time in studying the subject of baptism, both that he might satisfy himself as to the course which he should pursue in regard to the infants of those who might be converted under his labors, and that he might defend his views against the Baptist missionaries at Singapore, with whom he expected to spend a few months. The result of his careful study was that he rejected infant baptism and sprinkling of adults, and was himself baptized soon after his arrival in India. Of course his translation accorded with his views, and all his converts were immersed. In pursuing this course he occupied a position which no scholar will attempt to criticize.

And now what is the position of those who do not practice immersion, but who from necessity use Judson’s Bible? The *Christian Union* says that they are compelled “to explain the terms involved.” What kind of an explanation they could make that would be satisfactory to all parties, we cannot imagine. Here is the situation:

1. A Bible which says, “He that believes and is immersed shall be saved.”⁷ “Repent, and be immersed everyone of you in the name of Christ Jesus;”⁸
2. Educated and acute heathen who well know the meaning of the terms used; and
3. Missionaries who do not believe in nor practice immersion, but who believe in sprinkling instead, yet who, as scholars, know that the translation is a correct one, and, in fact, the only correct translation that could be made.

⁷ *Mark* 16:16.

⁸ *Acts* 2:38.

We fully agree with the *Christian Union*, that “there is for such missionaries an obvious disadvantage,” in making “the necessary explanation.” We would not care to be under such a necessity.

But the article contains still stronger testimony in favor of immersion. The editor says:

If the case were other than it is; if it were a question of antecedent instruction to translators what kind of versions to produce, the case might be different. We might, then, say, Let “baptize” be transferred—that is, transliterated—into the heathen tongues, not translated at all. Missionaries of differing views on the subject of baptism could then use one and the same Bible, applying their several explanations of the terms transferred. This is the course pursued in both the New and the Old Versions of the Bible, and it is a wise one. But here is a version already in existence, already in possession, exclusive possession. It translates, indeed, instead of transliterating. But it translates truly enough, so far as lexicography goes. Nobody can deny that; nobody at least whose denial would weigh. Nay, if non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of a general and indeterminate meaning. What would thus be gained? Why, against a version that gave what is certainly the general meaning of “baptize,” there would be a version that did not give the meaning of that word at all. That is all.

Note first the latter portion of the above paragraph: “Nobody whose denial would weigh” can deny that “baptize” is correctly rendered “immerse.”

If non-Baptist Burmese scholars were to make a new version of their own, and in that version translate the terms in question, such scholars would not render those terms in a manner to *contradict* the version already existing. The utmost that they could do would be to render those terms by words or phrases of a gen-

eral or indeterminate meaning. But this, [as the editor says,] would be no translation at all.

That is, we must either translate the Greek word “baptize” by “immerse,” or else not translate it. Well, why not translate it? Because the great mass of professed Christians do not choose to practice immersion, as they admit that the Bible teaches, and they want to be left free to put their own construction on the term. We are obliged to say that we could not write a recommendation for honesty for those who take such a position.

The case is more serious than is commonly supposed. It involves the question whether or not the Bible shall be placed in the hands of the people, or whether they shall depend upon the priests and clergy for their knowledge of the Scriptures. If one word be not translated, why translate any of the Bible? If it is a wise thing to translate the Greek word “baptize,” then why not transliterate the entire Bible? Then the New Testament in English, French, Italian, Spanish, etc., would consist merely of the Greek words of the text, but with the Roman letters instead of the Greek characters. For the inhabitants of Burma, the Burmese characters which correspond to the Greek letters, would be used, and so in other languages. This would enable the people to renounce the words, but as they would not know their meaning the clergy could apply any meaning which suited their notions, and not be under the necessity of making embarrassing explanations. Then everybody could make use of the Bible.

- The Spiritualist could teach that *Ecclesiastes* 9:5, 6, 10; *Job* 14:21, and kindred passages mean that departed souls are conscious and able to communicate with their friends.
- The Mormon could teach that the seventh commandment requires every man to keep at least two women whom he shall call his wives.
- Even the atheist or the pantheist could quote the first commandment as meaning either that there is no God, or that there are millions.

In short, there are no errors which might not be successfully promulgated on the authority of the Bible, because people who know no language but their own could not judge for themselves whether or not the facts were as represented. As far as the mass of people are concerned, the Bible would be just as valuable if it were written in hieroglyphics or senseless jargon; and for real use it would be as well to have no Bible at all, for that is what it really amounts to.

We have called this the policy of Romanism, and such it is. The policy of that church has ever been to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. She says that they may read it in the original; but as comparatively few are able to do this, that amounts to a complete prohibition. By leaving it untranslated, the priests can teach whatever they please without fear of contradiction. The Protestant world never tires of giving honor to Wycliffe, Luther, and Tyndale, for giving the Bible to the people in their own language, thus breaking the bands of Rome, yet it sanctions a course similar to that which the Catholic Church pursued; for it must be evident to all, that the difference between keeping the whole Bible from the people, and keeping a part of it from them, is only one of degree.

And this is the course that the *Christian Union* and with it all the so-called orthodox denominations, thinks is a wise one to pursue, at least in regard to the subject of baptism. We most heartily dissent. It is a very convenient subterfuge, and for that very reason it is not wise. Honesty is better than policy. If we are to take the Bible as our guide, let us have it just as it is. If it crosses our preconceived ideas, then let us change our own opinions and practices and make them accord with the standard. If any are determined to hold onto their own theories, or to tradition, in direct opposition to the Bible, let them do so on their own responsibility, and not use the authority of the Bible to back up that which it does not teach. If men do not believe what the Bible says, then let them cease quoting it as authority.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of the Lord is pure;

—and a practice which cannot stand when compared with the pure word as it came from the pen of inspiration, ought not to be adopted by men claiming to be Bible Christians. We fear that there are more persons than is commonly supposed, who are laying themselves liable to the penalties threatened in *Revelation* 22:18-19.



6. Importance of Bible Study

Signs of the Times, December 6, 1883

NO ONE will question the statement that those who presume to teach the Scripture should have a good knowledge of them.

Malachi 2

⁷ For the priest lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.

This fact is so well establish that dishonest men often take advantage to lead people astray; professing to be Bible teachers, they gain the confidence of those not familiar with the Bible, and palm off upon them the theories of man's devising, in the place of sacred truth. There are, however, but few, even of those who profess to love the Bible and to be guided by its teachings, who recognize the necessity of a thorough study of the Bible for themselves. It is for this reason that they are so easily deceived by ignorant and unscrupulous men.

If there were nothing in the Bible itself on this point, our own reason ought to teach us that if the Bible is to be our rule of life, we ought to know for selves. If it is a guide-book to tell us whereabouts we are in the journey toward the celestial city, and to warn us of the dangers and difficulties of the way, certainly everyone who is making the journey needs to be thoroughly acquainted with its contents. It was for this purpose that the Bible was written; the inspired penmen did not write for the benefit of a few, but for all. The way in which it was designed that the Bible should be studied, is thus given by Moses:

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart:

⁷ And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

⁸ And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

The last part was not to be taken literally, as the Jews afterward supposed: it is a figure to give expression to the note that the sacred truths were to be studied until they would be constantly in the mind, before the eyes, and influence both the thoughts of the head and the actions of the hand. David had the correct the idea of this injunction, for he said:

Psalms 119

¹¹ Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

There two points to be noted in this text:

1. “Your word have I *hid* in my heart.” How did he do this? The following verses tell:

¹⁵ I will meditate in your precepts, and have respect unto your ways.⁹

¹⁴⁸ My eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in your word.

It was by constant study that David was enabled to hide the word in his heart. Anyone who reads these verses thoughtfully, will be convinced that David was not content with having a copy of the law in his possession, but that he studied it until he had, as we say, “learned by heart.” How else could he meditate upon it in the night?

2. “That I might not sin against you.” This is why he studied the word so carefully. A blessing is pronounced on the man who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord;¹⁰ and this blessing consists primarily in the fact that by so doing he is kept from sin.

Psalms 37

³⁰ The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment.

⁹ Also verses 23, 48, 78.

¹⁰ *Psalms* 1:1-2.

³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

There is no other way than this brought to view in the Bible, whereby we may be kept from sin. We are to be sanctified through the truth,¹¹ and it is by obeying it that our lives are purified.¹² Now since none can enter heaven except those who are free from sin, it follows that it is as necessary for lay members to have the word of God in their hearts (not on their tables, or simply in their hands), as it is for preachers of the gospel. Of course the latter will be, from constant exercise, more ready in handling the word than others, but this should be the only difference. We, as a general thing, have not realized the necessity of close, personal study of the Bible. It is our standard; we draw our faith, pure and simple, from its pages; it is that which is to be our “shield and buckler,”¹³ *i.e.*, our defense, in the time of trouble. How important, then, that we make it our constant study.

The Bible is able not only to make us “wise unto salvation,”¹⁴ but it furnishes the best possible discipline for the mental faculties. The psalmist says:

Psalm 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding and to the simple.

When Moses was giving his final charge to the children of Israel, he said,

Deuteronomy 4

⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither you go to possess it.

⁶ Keep therefore and do them; for *this is your wisdom* and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all the statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

¹¹ *John* 17:17.

¹² *1 Peter* 1:22.

¹³ *Psalm* 91:4.

¹⁴ *2 Timothy* 3:15.

The book of the law was the only book that the Israelites had, yet there were no more shrewd and acute people among the ancients. Even today, the Jews, although they have sadly wandered from the ancient landmarks, are the leaders in literature and the arts; and we think that we are safe in saying that their aptness is due to the fact that their ancestors were men who made the law of God their constant study.



7. Some Modern Criticism

Signs of the Times, July 17, 1884

The apostle Paul wrote that...

Romans 15

⁴ Whatsoever things were written aforetime [referring to the Old Testament Scriptures] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

It would seem that the modern expositor reads it,

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our *criticism*.”

And in his case the word “criticism” means to pull to pieces, and not simply to wait and judge. In the great struggle to make the Bible harmonize with “science,” the subject of miracles has of course been much discussed. Now it happens that “science” has no place in its domain for miracles, and it has therefore occurred as a necessary consequence of the intense desire that the Bible shall not be regarded as being behind the age, that its avowed friends have quite generally set themselves to work to explain all supposed miracles in accordance with “known natural laws.” The latest effort disposes of the miracle of the sun’s standing still at the command of Joshua in the following manner:

A writer in the *Church Quarterly Review* maintains that what the Israelitish leader prayed for was not that the sun and moon might “stand still,” but that they might “be silent,” that is to say, “ceased to shine”—*dom shemesh*, as the Hebrew text has it. A storm of hail-stones was the principal cause of the defeat of the allied kings. Joshua, finding that the storm and darkness by which it was accomplished did more toward the overthrow of the enemy than his own troops, naturally prayed that the darkness might continue until the utter ruin of the foe was accomplished. The formidable astronomical objections to the miracle are thus removed by a simple philological discovery, which the reader may accept or not, at his pleasure.

We are glad that the *Christian at Work*, from which we clip the above, gives us the privilege of accepting it or not, as we choose. We choose to give such nonsense a wide berth. We are greatly surprised that that journal, and others which lay claim to great Biblical knowledge, should quote with approval a theory which is so directly contradictory to the plain Scripture narrative. It is simply a proof that there is a wide-spread desire to strip the Bible of everything which stands in the way of its acceptance by a self-sufficient, unbelieving world,—in other words to make the way of life so broad that all will find themselves in it without making any effort.

How does this explanation agree with the Bible? Let us see. Our critic says that the sun was simply darkened during the day; the Bible says,

Joshua 10

¹³ So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and *hasted not to go down about a whole day.*

We have seen many stormy days when the sun did not shine, but the sun always set at the appointed time. In this instance the sun did not go down, according to Joshua's command; but if darkness were what he wished for, he would with more propriety have prayed that the sun might hasten its going down, instead of that its course should be stayed.

Again, the sacred historian declares:

¹⁴ And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man.

If the answer to Joshua's prayer consisted simply in the Lord sending a storm and darkness, we cannot understand this statement, for there have been many stormy days since then; but we can well believe that never since that time has there been so extraordinary an occurrence as the sun's standing still for a whole day. It will be clearly seen that if a critic had read the entire narrative carefully, his criticism could not have been made.

“But,” says one, “how do *you* explain that miracle?”

We don’t explain it; it is entirely beyond our capacity, and that is why we call it a miracle. There are some wonderful things that we *can* account for, but we do not call them miracles. We believe in a God, and therefore we believe in miracles—things entirely beyond the comprehension of human minds. The desire to find an explanation for all recorded miracles and the Bible, arises from a growing unbelief that such things really occur; and to deny the occurrence of miracles is really the same as denying the existence of God.

Perhaps this last statement may not be self-evident to all; we think it can easily be made to appear. God is greater than man; if He were not, He would be simply a man, and therefore not an object of worship. But He is infinite.

Job 11

⁷ Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?

This question can be answered only in the negative. God is incomprehensible. Then of course His acts must be above the comprehension of man. Paul had thought much on heavenly things, and had been admitted into close communion with the Lord, and he exclaimed,

Romans 11

³³ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.

This is only in keeping with what we should expect. Finite minds cannot grasp infinity. Then of course there must be miracles. And when many things are recorded, all of which are beyond our comprehension, who shall say that some of these are possible and others impossible? Who will dare to limit the power of an infinite God?

“But,” says another, “do you believe that God violates laws of nature, in performing miracles?”

Again we reply, We do not know; it is impossible to tell. We are very certain that He has often done things that directly conflict with any laws known to man. But then there are many things that even scientific men do not know. So long as we cannot understand God, we cannot understand the laws of nature, for they are His laws. Things that seem impossible to us, may be in perfect harmony with laws of which we know nothing. When the Dutch ambassador told the king of Siam that in his country water sometimes assumed such a condition that man could walk upon it, the king said,

“I often thought that you were untruthful, but now I know you lie. It is impossible for man to walk upon water.”

Doubtless the king’s scientific men would have said the same thing, and *proved* it by science. It is contrary to the nature of a clock for the hands to move backward, and yet a man can move them backward. The child gazes with wonder upon the steam engine, and cannot comprehend how the engineer can start, stop, or back it at pleasure; but it would be foolishness in him to assert that those things cannot be done. Well, this universe is the great machine which God has made, and which He controls. Between the mind of man and that of the great Architect, there is no more comparison than there is between the ant beside the track, and the man who drives the engine. And so, instead of denying the existence of miracles, we are lost in wonder and admiration of the power that is as infinitely beyond us.

And now a few words by way of application. Some will say,

“We did not need this article, for we believed in the miracles of the Bible just as they are recorded.”

We are glad of that. But would not such an article as the one from which we have quoted shake your faith?

“No.”

Why not?

“Because it directly contradicts the Bible.”

But do you profess to know more about the Bible than a learned D. D., who has spent a life-time in its study, and who understands the Hebrew and Greek? You reply,

“I can understand the English language, and I know when a man is contradicting the plain statement of the Bible.”

Then you are willing to admit that “great men are not always wise,” and that even learned men may be led by their prejudices into grievous and palpable errors?

“Certainly.”

Well this is just what we wish to have you bear in mind. And now whenever you hear some wise men say that God did not bless and sanctify the seventh day, but only the Sabbath institution, and that He now requires men to observe the first day instead of the seventh, don't be overawed into acquiescence by the immensity of his learning, but simply ask him for his authority.

Isaiah 8

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

8. Helps in Studying the Lesson

Signs of the Times, November 27, 1884

THE question has been asked,

At what time in the study of the Sabbath-school lessons should *helps* be brought in, and how should they be used?

To this question it is difficult to get an answer in a few words. In order to have a thorough knowledge of the subject, it would be necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by “helps;” but that must be waived for the present. We will suppose it to include the concordance, dictionaries, atlas, Commentaries, histories, etc. Some will derive help from that which would be of no service to others. Taking it for granted that the things at hand are such as may be a help indeed, we would mark out, in brief, the following as a good plan for starting the lesson:

Having learned from the lesson paper what the lesson is about, and what portion of Scripture it covers, take the Bible at once, there is where you will find the lesson to be studied. Read carefully, several times, all the texts that are quoted, so as to get them well in mind. The next step will be to commit to memory the portion that is to be memorized. This, of course, will not be accomplished at one effort; to commit the text thoroughly will be a work covering the whole week. If the student wishes, and is able, he may commit the whole of the lesson to memory; this is done by some, with profit. But it is not best to attempt too much at once. It is not the desire to tax the memory to such an extent that earnest thought cannot be put upon the matter thus committed.

While thus learning the texts referred to, the student should bear in mind the object for which they are quoted. Very often many things may be learned from a single verse; the question will indicate for what particular thing the verses is quoted. Then after learning the answers to each individual question, the lesson should be considered as a whole, to see the relation of the ques-

tions to one another, and what general point is made by the whole lesson. When this has been done, the student is ready to consult outside helps.

In the matter of consulting commentaries, great care and judgment must be exercised, as on doctrinal points they are often misleading. It is not safe for any one to consult commentaries indiscriminately, unless he is previously pretty well grounded in the truth. Commentaries are more for the learned than the unlearned. If one has a good general idea of the subject which he is studying, and is anchored to certain fixed principles, so that he can sift the chaff from the wheat, he will learn much from commentaries. It often happens that a positively erroneous exposition will awaken a train of thought in the mind of the careful student, that will be very profitable. Those, however, who are most familiar with commentaries, know that quite often the text upon which the student most needs light, is the one upon which the least is said. The reasons for this is obvious. It is perhaps needless to suggest that if there is any work bearing on the lesson, of whose orthodoxy you are fully assured, that is the one to be consulted first. It will aid your judgment in your further search.

One “help” should never be neglected. It is that of the Holy Spirit. It is the author of the Bible,¹⁵ and can best give light upon it. One of its offices is to guide into all truth,¹⁶ and it may be had by any one for the asking.¹⁷ The promise,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men literally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him,

—is given to all. This help should be sought before beginning the lesson, and during all the time of studying it. One thing more: The Saviour has said,

¹⁵ 2 Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 6:17.

¹⁶ John 16:13.

¹⁷ Luke 11:13; Mark 11:24.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.

He who earnestly and prayerfully studies the word, with a sincere desire to profit by it, cannot fail to be enlightened. Jesus also said,

John 14

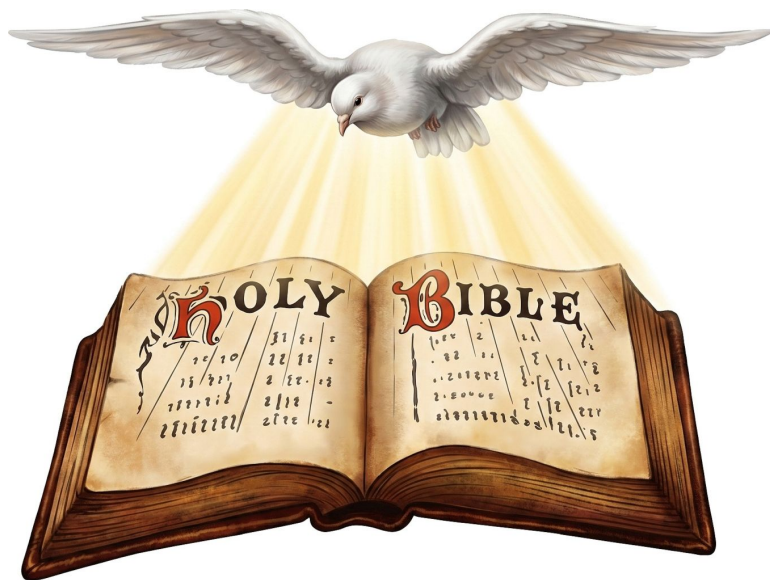
²³ If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Now we read...

1 John 1

⁵ ...that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

If then He dwells in us, what an all-powerful, ever-present help we have. Without this help, all others are worthless.



9. How Do You Read? (1885)

Signs of the Times, June 11, 1885
Original title: How Readest Thou?

THERE has been of late quite an interest raised over the question in a recent Sabbath-school lesson, as to how old Abram was when his father died. We will therefore quote a portion of one letter from a brother who requests an answer through the *Signs*, and the answer to it will serve for all. He says:

The idea was conveyed in the Sabbath-school lesson in the *Signs*, a few weeks ago, that Abram was seventy-five years old when his father died, and the subject was brought up in the school at _____, which caused some comment.

As well as I remember, the *Signs* stated plainly that he was at that age at the death of his father, and suppose the conclusion was gotten at in this way. In the last verse of *Genesis* 11 we have an account of the death of Terah, Abram's father, and the 12th chapter begins with what the Lord had told Abram in regard to leaving his father's house, etc., and says:

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran," and as his father had died before he departed, he must have been seventy-five when his father died.

The brother has the idea exactly, and when we have read his words we wondered that there could be any question in his mind. But the next few words of his letter show the cause of his difficulty. He continues:

But right here is where I think the mistake is. The Bible does say that Terah died before Abram left Haran, but, on the other hand, conveys the idea very strongly that he did not. It is true that the last verse of chapter 11 gives an account of the death of Terah, and the first verse of chapter 12 gives an account of what the Lord told Abram about leaving his country, but it does not say that it was after his father's death that He told him this, or that he did not leave before his father's death.

And right here is where we would place several exclamation marks. It is strange that the brother should have forgotten or overlooked *Acts 7:2-4*, which was referred to in the same lesson, and which reads thus:

Acts 7

² Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran [Haran],

³ And said unto him, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you.

⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and *from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him* into this land, wherein you now dwell.

The question, then, is reduced to this simple proposition: Since Abram left Haran when his father died,¹⁸ and he was seventy-five years old when he left Haran,¹⁹ how old was he when his father died? No great mathematical skill is required to solve this problem. This was about the order in which it was stated in the Sabbath-school lesson, if we remember correctly. We apprehend that the question concerning Abram's age at the death of his father, was raised in order to see if those studying the lessons were in the habit of comparing scripture with scripture, and noting the bearing of one upon the other. It seems that in this case many did not do so.

What has thrown so many off the track is this: They read in *Genesis 11:26*,

Genesis 11

²⁶ And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

And in *Genesis 11:32* they read:

¹⁸ *Acts 7:2-4*.

¹⁹ *Genesis 12:4*.

Genesis 11

³² And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

Putting these two together, they say,

“Why, of course Abram was 135 years old when his father died.”

Thus they ignored the plain and positive statements of *Genesis* 12:4 and *Acts* 7:4, by which we must be guided. The record does not say that Abram was born when his father was seventy-five years old. There are two statements in *Genesis* 11:26: one is that Terah lived seventy years without children, and the other is that he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. We are not to suppose that these three sons were all born at the same time, anymore than we are to suppose when we read,

Genesis 5

⁷ And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters,

—that all his sons and daughters were born at one time. Neither is it necessary to suppose that Abram was the first-born. The youngest son, if he was the most noted, is very often named first. Thus, “Ephraim and Manasseh” is the order in which Joseph’s sons are usually named, although Ephraim was the younger.²⁰

For another illustration, see verse 32:

³² And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The casual reader might suppose that these sons were all born to Noah at one time, and he would certainly suppose that Shem was the eldest, and Japheth the youngest. But by comparing *Genesis* 9:22-24 with *Genesis* 10:21, we learn that Japheth was the eldest son, and Shem was Noah’s second son. He is mentioned first, because he is most worthy of note, as being the ancestors of

²⁰ See *Genesis* 41:51-52; 48:17-20.

Abraham. So it is in *Genesis* 11:26. Terah was seventy years old when the first of his sons was born; but this was not Abram, since he was not born until his father was 135 years old. (Compare the age of Abram at his father's death, with *Genesis* 11:32.) He is, however, named first, because he was the only one of note among the sons of Terah.

We have not devoted so much space to this question because we thought it a matter of great importance that all should know just how old Abraham was at his father's death, but to show the necessity of careful thought in studying the Scriptures. All the facts of any case do not always appear in a single passage, and different ones must be compared. One thing must always be borne in mind: Whenever a thing is plainly stated in the text or must *necessarily* be concluded from a comparison of two or more positive statements, no *seeming* contradiction based on an inference, can be entertained. Incomplete statements, or inferences, must always be interpreted in harmony with positive declarations. By so doing we shall find perfect harmony in the Bible.

10. Tributes to the Bible

Signs of the Times, October 15, 1885

QUITE frequently we have received articles which contain quotations from some eminent men, perhaps an infidel, who has been compelled to testify to the simplicity and beautiful consistency of the Bible, and of the Christian religion. At almost regular intervals we see such tributes in certain religious journalists, prominent among these tributes being Napoleon Bonaparte's testimony concerning our Lord, which he gave while on the island of St. Helena.

Perhaps some of our readers may have noticed the absence of such quotations from the columns of the *Signs*. There is a reason why they do not appear. That is, we do not believe that the Bible stands in any need of such tributes, or that it gains anything from them. Says Paul,

Hebrews 7

⁷ And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

Therefore for men to give their solemn endorsement of the Bible and of Jesus Christ, is a reversal of the correct order of things. Especially is this so when those men are, or have been as long as they had opportunity, notoriously wicked men. If the Bible commends a man, it is the highest honor that can be given to human kind; it is more than all else in the world, and all that any man needs. To have any man commend the Bible, adds not one whit to its authenticity or force; and to quote such commendation seems to us to be ridiculous.

Further than this, we do not believe that the Bible needs to be "defended." Even if it did need to be defended, who shall defend it? Is it not rather turning things around to speak of a man defending the Bible? May it not be truly said of the Bible:

Isaiah 25

⁴ For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the

heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall?

Is it proper to speak of *defending* that from which we derive our sustenance, and upon which we depend for our lives?

The Bible is abundantly able to defend itself. We may expound it, and draw from the depths the wonderful truths which alone are capable of overthrowing error, but that is simply letting the Bible speak for itself. All the arguments that can be drawn from outside sources to meet the assaults of skepticism, are worthless when compared with a plain statement of some Bible doctrine. When the most profound argument in proof of the divine origin of the Bible have utterly failed to convert an infidel from the error of his ways, a clear exposition of the prophecies, and that the teaching of the Bible on the nature of man, the fate of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous, have often proved successful. And we will here say that if this latter method will not cause an infidel to see the folly of his position, no other method need be tried.

Said Jesus:

Mark 16

¹⁵ Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes shall be damned.

That is all.

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the word.

Let the light from the sacred word shine forth in all its clearness, and the word which is...

Hebrews 4

¹² ...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,

–will surely convict every soul that is not hopelessly entangled in the snares of Satan. That word carries with it its own defense; it bears the endorsement of heaven. To those who will not accept it *entirely*, there is but one alternative.

Jeremiah 23

²⁸ The prophet that has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that has my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

²⁹ What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? says the Lord; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?



11. Paul and the Revision Committee

Signs of the Times, October 29, 1885

IN THE 8th *Psalm*, one of the most beautiful compositions ever written, occurs this passage, which has become familiar even to those not intimately acquainted with the Bible:

Psalm 8

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

⁴ What is man, that You are mindful of him? and the son of man, that You visit him?

⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.

In the *New Version*, the 5th verse reads thus:

⁵ For You have made him but lower than God, and crowned him with glory and honor.

A religious journal, in noting some changes in familiar text, puts this text in a group of which it says:

“The following changes have perhaps been necessary, but grate sadly against literary associations.”

For ourselves, we can say that the change grates sadly against Scriptural associations, and we do not believe it to be at all necessary. We give the following reason why we dare disagree with the learned Revision Committee:

In the 2nd chapter of *Hebrews*, the apostle, in showing how Christ, who had “by inheritance” a more excellent name than the angels, was made on a level with men, quotes the words of the psalmist concerning man, as follows:

Hebrews 2

⁶ But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? or the son of man, that You visit him?

⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor.

Here the Greek word is *angelos*, the word invariably rendered “angel.” There is no question but that the apostle used the word *angeloi* (plural form) in quoting from *Psalms* 8:5, and the Revision Committee have agreed that it is correctly rendered “angels,” since it is so rendered in the New Version. But if “angels” is the proper word to use in quoting from *Psalms* 8:5, and the authority of an inspired apostle ought certainly to settle that point, why should not the same word be used in the passage itself? By what authority did the revisers use the word “God” in rendering the Hebrew word which Paul translates “angels”?

It is true that the Hebrew word in *Psalms* 8:5 is *eloheem*, a word that is usually used with reference to a deity, either the true God or a false god, and there is no other place in the Old Testament where it is rendered “angels;” and therefore the revisers doubtless thought that consistency required them to render it “God” in this instance. But we are certain that consistency would require instead that the text should agree with the same text as translated by the inspired writer of *Hebrews*. In other words, even though the lexicons knew nothing about such a rendering of *eloheem*, *Hebrews* 2:7 would show that in one instance, at least, it undoubtedly refers to angels. And the Revision Committee, in retaining the word “angels” in *Hebrews* 2:7, while they rejected it in *Psalms* 8:5, have convicted themselves of inconsistency.

Such renderings go a long ways toward making some people doubt whether the New Version is a decided improvement on the Old. At any rate, we do not feel inclined to use it to the exclusion of the Old Version. While we find it very valuable as a commentary, we regard it in that light, and cannot rely upon it with that confidence that we do upon the version commonly used. A translator of the Bible needs, far more than the commentator, to be acquainted with the entire Bible, and thoroughly imbued with its spirit. We very much doubt if it is possible for any body of men to agree upon a version of the Bible that will be superior to King James’s version.

12. Vain Customs

Signs of the Times, December 3, 1885

IN AN editorial on “Infant Baptism,” in a recent number of the California *Christian Advocate*, we find, among others equally sound, the following “argument” for that practice:

Is it not an assumption almost amounting to impudence, to be told that infant baptism has no foundation whatever, when its history is so prominent and its practice so general through all the ages? Can it be possible that a small portion of the church has all the truth, and the rest of us, constituting a vast majority in every century, have none at all?

Before answering this question, let us have a few figures. The population of the earth is not far from fourteen millions of people. Of this number about 480,000,000 are Buddhists and followers of Confucius; about 230,000,000 are barbarous tribes that practice fetishism,—the very lowest form of heathenism; something over 120,000,000 are Mohammedans, and about the same number are Brahminical Hindus. Less than 400,000,000 our nominally Christian, of this number nearly 300,000,000 are members of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, leaving only a little over one hundred million of so-called Protestants of all denominations, including infidels, etc. That is, over seven hundred million people, one-half the population of the earth, are heathen, and less than one-third of the inhabitants of the earth have even a knowledge of the religion which teaches that there is one God, and of Jesus Christ whom He sent.

Now we might answer the *Advocate*’s question by the Yankee method of asking another:

Is it not an assumption almost amounting to impudence, to be told that [the worship of images] has no [Biblical] foundation whatever, when its history is so prominent and its practice so general throughout of the ages?

Can it be possible that a small portion of mankind has all the truth, and that the rest, constituting a vast majority in every century, have none at all?

We have stated that of the so-called Christians, only one-fourth are Protestants. The rest believe in purgatory, prayers to and for the dead, and various other things which the *Advocate* considers pernicious. Is it not “an assumption almost amounting to impudence,” for a few Protestants to oppose the doctrine held by so large a body of “Christians,” many of whom are skilled in all the learning of the schools? Hear what the Catholic Dr. Eck said, over three hundred years ago, to Luther, who was opposing the presumptuous claims of the pope:

I am astonished at the humility and diffidence with which the reverend doctor undertakes to stand alone against so many illustrious Fathers, thus affirming that he knows more of these things than the sovereign pontiff, the councils, divines, and universities! . . . It would no doubt be very wonderful if God had hidden the truth from so many saints and martyrs, till the advent of the reverend father.

Just compare this paragraph with the first one quoted. We might almost accuse the *Advocate* of plagiarizing from the learned chancellor of Ingolstadt. If the *Advocate*’s argument for infant baptism be sound, then Dr. Eck’s sarcastic remarks proved the fallacy of Luther’s position; and the same argument proves that paganism is the only true religion! We have no sympathy nor respect for that sort of argument.

Let us turn the tables. The Bible says,

Mark 16

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Infants are not capable of belief; but since they have committed no sin, they are saved by virtue of Christ’s atoning blood, without belief. If they die in infancy, they never have any personal knowl-

edge of sin. No one who does not or cannot is a subject for baptism, according to the Saviour's testimony. Now we ask,

“Is it not an assumption which is even worse than impudence, for men to say that infant “baptism” is a Christian ordinance, when in the whole Bible there is not a syllable in favor of it?”

We claim that the presumption is all on the side of the seeming majority; for one man with the Bible to sustain him, may without presumption withstand the world.

If numbers and custom prove the correctness of any theory or practice, then all error must be correct. A few hundred years ago everybody believed that the earth was flat. According to the *Advocate's* reasoning, the earth at that time *was* flat; but since the time of Galileo it has gradually been assuming a spherical shape, until, now that nearly everybody believes it to be round, it is quite round, being only a little flattened at the poles! And this is no more absurd than that the most common argument for infant “baptism” and Sunday-keeping.

So true is it that the majority of people are, and always have been, in the wrong, that whenever we hear a person quote custom in favor of any practice, we at once decide,

1. That he has nothing better to offer, and
2. That the practice is, without doubt, wrong.

We so decide because many hundred years ago, the prophet of God declared that:

Jeremiah 10

³ The customs of the people are vain,

—and inspired statements are true in all ages of world's history.

13. How Does It Happen

Signs of the Times, December 24, 1885

WHEN people for the first time hear or read the truth concerning the Sabbath, the nature of man, the coming of the Lord, and other Bible doctrines held by Seventh-day Adventists, they frequently ask,

“If these things are so plainly taught in the Bible, why is it that they have not been taught by Bible students in past ages? Why is it that Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and other learned and pious theologians did not see these doctrines?”

A satisfactory answer to these questions may easily be given. We must consider the circumstances under which those men began their labors. We must remember that when the Reformation began, the Bible had been for several hundred years a proscribed book. The art of printing was unknown, and books were necessarily copied by hand. This was a tedious process, and made it impossible for poor people to own them.

Besides this, the only copies of the Bible in existence were in the original Greek and Hebrew, or in Latin; and when we remember that Greek and Hebrew were rarely taught, even in the universities, and that few learned men had any knowledge of those languages, Latin being the only language of educated people, we see that the number of people who could use the Bible, even had they possessed a copy, was very limited.

Still further, when we remember that the few manuscript copies of the Bible that were in existence were the property of the Catholic Church, which had no interest in circulating them among the people, but on the contrary, kept these copies carefully concealed, we see that it was next to impossible for anybody to have any personal acquaintance with the word of God. Says D'Aubigne:

The priests having taken into their own hands the disposing [of] a salvation which belonged only to God, had thereby secured a sufficient hold on the respect of the people. What need had they [the priests] to study sacred learning? It was no longer their office to explain the Scriptures, but to grant letters of indulgence; and for the fulfilling of that ministry, it was unnecessary to have acquired any great learning. In country parts, says Wimpfeling, they appointed as preachers poor wretches whom they had taken from beggary, and who had been cooks, musicians, huntsmen, stable-boys, and even worse.

The superior clergy themselves were sunk in great ignorance. A bishop of Danfeldt congratulated himself on never having learned Greek or Hebrew. The monks asserted that all heresies arose from these languages, but especially from the Greek. "Greek," continued he, "is a modern language but recently invented, and against which we must be upon our guard. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that whoever studies that immediately becomes a Jew." . . . Thomas Linacer, a learned and celebrated divine, had never read the New Testament. Drawing near his end (in 1524), he called for it, but quickly threw it from him with an oath because his eye had caught the words, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." "Either this is not the gospel," said he, "or we are not Christians." Even the schools of theology in Paris did not scruple to declare before the Parliament. "There is an end of religion if the study of Hebrew and Greek is permitted."

If here and there among the clergy some learning existed, it was not in sacred literature. The Ciceronians of Italy affect great contempt for the Bible on account of its style. Men who arrogated to themselves the title of priests of Christ's church, translated the words of the Holy Ghost into the style of Virgil and of Horace to accommodate them to the ears of men of taste. The Cardinal Bembo wrote always instead of "the Holy Spirit," "the breath of the celestial zephyr;" for "remission of sins" he substituted "the pity of the Manes²¹ and of the gods;" and instead of "Christ the Son of God," "Minerva sprung from the brows of Jupiter." Finding, one day, the respectable Sadoletus employed on

²¹The "Manes" refers to the souls or ghosts of the dead in ancient Roman religion, who were sometimes deified and considered benevolent protectors.

the translation of the epistle to the Romans, “Leave these childish productions,” said he, “such puerilities do not become a sensible man.”

It was only a few weeks ago that a Catholic priest in Montreal, speaking of the Protestant Bible, said to his congregation:

“I want to be understood that the Church forbids you to read those Bibles. If you have any of them in your house, burn them; and if you do not want to burn them, bring them to me, and I will burn them.”



It was amidst influences like these that the Reformation began. Luther was twenty years old before he had even seen a copy of the Bible. Now if any one wonders why he did not, in his lifetime, grasp all the truths which it contains, let him try an experiment: Let him give the Bible to a man who has never seen the book, and see how long it will take him to thoroughly understand it. Let the

reader consider his own case, and see how great an understanding he has of the Bible; then remember that there can scarcely be a parallel to Luther's case nowadays, because the influence of the Bible is everywhere. The people who have never read it have met its teachings in books, or perhaps in sermons, or in their intercourse with other people. When we think of these things, instead of wondering that Luther did not understand more of the Bible, we are lost in astonishment that he was able to grasp so many of its truths as he did.

When we come to the time of Wesley, we find that he had a still better understanding of the Bible than Luther had. This was not because he was a more talented or a more devoted man than Luther, but because he had better advantages. He had the benefit of all of Luther's study and experience, as well as of that of many other learned men. And as we come down a hundred years later, to our own time, it is no egotism to say that we may have a deeper insight into the truths of the Bible than Wesley had, because we have the aid of his research, and that of Bible students since his time. It would indeed be a cause for shame to any intelligent Bible student if he did not profit by the light thrown upon the word by those men of God.

Besides this, we must remember that there are special truths for special occasions. Peter speaks of the "present truth."²² There is such a truth for every age. The special truth for the time of Luther was justification by faith. The people were swallowed up in dead forms and useless ceremonies, and needed instruction in the first principles of the gospel, of which the world was totally ignorant. All the preaching needed to be directed to that one thing. As the Bible became a common book, and the doctrine of justification by faith and not by works was more generally understood, other points could be brought in.

As we come down to the early portion of this century, we see a special prominence given to the doctrine of Christ's second com-

²² 2 Peter 1:12.

ing. Ministers of all denominations seemed moved by a common impulse to study the prophecies, and to teach them to the people. A little later the doctrine of eternal life only in Christ, and that received at the resurrection, began to be preached quite extensively. This was a natural consequence of the preaching of the second advent. And still later we find special attention given to the law of God, and the Sabbath, until now the truth on this point has been circulated throughout the world. To be sure, there have been a few people in all generations who have held all, or nearly all, of these truths; but the attention of the people as a whole has been directed to only one new truth at a time.

Our Lord, in speaking to His disciples, recognized the fact that the human mind must be led into truth step by step when He said:

John 16

¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.

It will be noticed, however, that while in different generations one truth has been made especially prominent, the truths which have been brought out in preceding generations are not ignored, but the new truths are added to them; and thus is fulfilled the statement that...

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.

It is not for us to spend time wondering why former generations did not have certain doctrines preached to them, but simply to inquire, Are these things so? This may be easily determined by the Bible, and we should, instead of questioning, rejoice that new light is given to us, and should walk in the light while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us.²³

²³ John 12:35.

14. The Bible vs. Mythology

Signs of the Times, May 20, 1886

AMONG Christian people of modern times nothing is more common than to speak of death as a river. It is spoken of as “the dark river,” “death’s river,” “the dismal flood,” etc. People have died are said to have “crossed the river,” or “passed over to the other side.” Of course these terms can be used only by those who believe the paradox at death men still continue to live. They believe that death is but the entrance to life, and therefore they sing,

Death is the gate to endless joy,²⁴

—and,

’Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call us to His arms.²⁵

In harmony with this idea, also, they sing,

Shall we meet beyond the river?²⁶

—meaning,

“Shall we meet after death?”

Now every Bible student ought to know that these expressions are entirely unscriptural. Death is *not* the gate to endless joy, but an enemy.²⁷ It is not the voice that Jesus sends to call us to His arms, but something that is under the control of the devil.²⁸ Christ gained the power and the right to call His children to His arms only by gaining the victory over death.²⁹ Death is not a river across which the righteous are ferried to the realms of bliss, but a voracious monster by which they are held until the last trump re-

²⁴ Isaac Watts, *Why Should We Start, and Fear to Die?*, 1707.

²⁵ Isaac Watts, *The Death and Burial of a Saint*.

²⁶ H. L. Hastings, *The Bright Forever*, 1858.

²⁷ See *1 Corinthians* 15:26.

²⁸ *Hebrews* 2:14.

²⁹ *Hebrews* 2:14-15; *Revelation* 3:18.

leases them from its cruel grasp.³⁰ And then this “last enemy” shall be destroyed.³¹ Nowhere in the Bible is death likened to a river.

Whence then did these expressions arise? Some, no doubt, think that the figure comes from the Israelites crossing the river Jordan into the land of Canaan. But that is a mistaken idea.

1. Although the entering of the Israelites into Canaan was a type of the entering of the saints into their final inheritance, we have seen that death is not the gate to that inheritance, and that some will receive their inheritance without seeing death.³² Therefore the river Jordan cannot be a type of death.

2. Even if it were a type of death, the popular idea would not hold, because the river was cut off, so that the Israelites went over dry shod.

3. There was no change whatever of the condition of the Israelites after they crossed the river. The entire absence of any Bible comparison of death to a river, and the fact that death is emphatically stated to be an enemy, and that it is not in any sense the boundary of our eternal inheritance, show that the popular expressions for death have no Bible foundation.

If we study heathen mythology, however we find the origin of these terms. Among the heathen, the river Styx encircled the abode of the dead. In order to get to this abode, the departed had to be towed over the Styx in a ferry managed by Charon who, demanded an *obolus*, about three cents, as his fee. To provide the soul with the necessary means to defray his expenses to *Hades*, an *obolus* was always placed in the mouth of the dead person. From this heathen custom arose the modern practice of calling death a river, and of speaking of the dead as having passed to the other shore, or as having been wafted over the river.

³⁰ 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Hosea 13:14.

³¹ 1 Corinthians 15:26.

³² See 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

Now we have no objection to this. Indeed, we think that it is eminently fitting that those who hold to the heathen doctrine of natural immortality should use heathen terms in speaking of it. Nevertheless, the users of such language sometimes get mixed in their metaphors, as is evident from the following extract from a communication written by Dr. William Dean to the *Watchman*:

Yesterday I stood on the banks of the dark river to help a young man of twenty-nine years, a New York broker, into the ferry-boat to take him over to the other side. As he was moving out, his young wife stretched out her arms and caught him, exclaiming, in her anguish, “—don’t go! I cannot let you go. If you must go, take me with you.” This departure reminded me that I was sent to cross the same river, and gave rise to a train of serious reflections.

The mixture of the literal and the figurative in the above paragraph is amusing. For instance, are we to suppose that the Doctor was himself at the point of death? That is what is usually meant when a person is said to be standing on the brink of “the dark river.”

Again, when the Doctor says that he was helping the young man into the ferry-boat which was to bear him over the river, are we to understand that he was trying to hasten the young man’s death? We have never heard it claimed by even the most enthusiastic believer in the doctrine that “death is the gate to endless joy,” that it is allowable to kill a good man in order to get into heaven sooner. The Doctor’s conduct ought to be inquired into. But the next sentence is more wonderful still:

As he was moving off, his young wife stretched out her arms and caught him, explaining in her anguish, “—don’t go! I cannot let you go!”

How was this? Was the young man about to cross the river bodily? We never supposed that Charon’s craft was staunch enough to carry anything more substantial than an immaterial spirit. The language would indicate that his body was about to make the attempt to accompany the spirit to the “other side.” Or

are we to infer that the young wife caught her husband's immaterial spirit in her arms? If so, it was a remarkable case of materialization. We hope that in a future letter the Doctor will give us more of the details of this affair. He ought at least to tell us plainly whether he killed the young man or not.

The only moral which we shall draw from this narrative is that professed Christians ought not to mix their faith with heathen doctrines and mythological expressions. Leave such things to the unenlightened heathen, but let Christians follow the doctrines and use the language of the Bible.



15. How We May Know

Signs of the Times, September 30, 1886

SOME people refuse to accept the Bible because there are so many things in it they cannot understand. If they could understand the Bible, they would accept it and Christ. Such need never expect to understand the Bible, for...

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

If a man would understand the Bible, to begin with it is necessary for him to understand and believe, only these two simple verses:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

If he has mastered these two texts and all he has to do to master them is to believe them with his whole heart, then he is a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and being in Christ, he has the Spirit of Christ, and may discern spiritual things. If he grows in the knowledge of Christ, he must necessarily grow in wisdom, for Christ is our wisdom as well as our redemption.

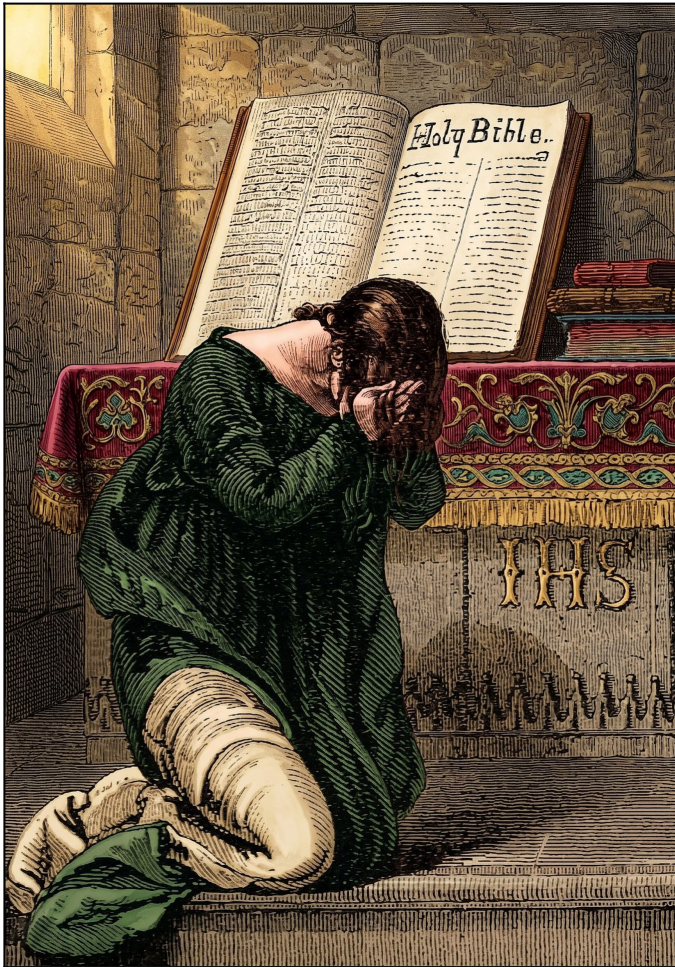
1 Corinthians 1

³⁰ But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Colossians 2

³ In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Therefore in Christ we may obtain all wisdom, but out of him we must remain ignorant. So we say to all, if you wish to understand the Bible, confess your sins to God, accept the sacrifice which He has provided, and receive His pardon. There is no Biblical knowledge which is not possible to the thoroughly converted man.



16. A Few Principles of Interpretation

Signs of the Times, January 6, 1887

THE *Signs of the Times* is an expository journal. The main object for which it was established was to present Scripture truth in the simplest and clearest manner possible. During the coming year it will be our endeavor to make it meet this object more fully than ever before, and as a preliminary, we wish to lay down for our readers a few of the principles which we shall invariably follow in our interpretation, and which, if followed, in a prayerful and candid spirit, cannot fail to lead a person to a proper understanding of the sacred word.

1. The Bible Is the Truth

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We accept this fully, and apply it to the entire Bible. The Bible does not simply *contain* the truth, but it *is* the truth, and the whole truth. Aside from the Bible there can be no moral or spiritual truth and light. And whatever disagrees with the Bible, whether it be in the realm of morals or of science, must be false. The principle here laid down must underlie all sound Biblical exegesis. If this be not admitted, it can be of no use to try to study the Bible.

2. The Bible Is Harmonious

The Bible is one connected, consistent, harmonious book. It is composed of many books, but these books form only *one Book*. They are not independent one of another. This Book was written by many different persons, yet it has only one author, and that is the Spirit of God. The different parts are inspired by the same Spirit, and have one purpose; there is a vital connection between

them. They are characterized by oneness of thought. As Christ prayed that His disciples might be one, so that the world might know that the Father had sent Him,³³ so the perfect harmony between the various parts of the Bible is proof that it came from God. If we accept the Bible as the inspired word of God we must expect to find it harmonious throughout, for God cannot deny himself. So whoever wishes to study the word of God with any degree of satisfaction, must first fix in his mind the fact that the Bible cannot contradict itself.

As a corollary to this principle it might be stated that the Bible does not need to be “harmonized.” To attempt that is a thankless task, because the Bible is already harmonized. It is an instrument that was tuned by the Almighty himself, and every string vibrates in harmony with every other. All that the Bible student has to do is to study the harmony that already exists. If two texts *seem* to be contradictory, the student may rest assured that he does not understand one or the other, or perhaps either one. But when the position which he holds on one text is upheld by other texts bearing on the same point, and is not contradicted by any other text; that is, when a position taken in regard to any text is consistent with the entire Bible, that of itself is evidence that that position is correct; for the Bible could not agree with a false position.

3. The Bible Interprets Itself

The Bible must interpret itself. By the Bible man may be “*thoroughly* furnished unto all good works;” hence it cannot need the addition of matter outside of itself.

4. The Bible Is a Connected Whole

One part of the Bible cannot be fully understood when taken by itself, apart from its connection, or without reference to the remaining portion of the Bible. This might also be called a corollary to the second proposition laid down. If the Bible is one connected whole, then all the parts are necessary to the formation of that whole. There is a mutual dependence between all the parts, and

³³ *John* 17:21.

therefore in considering one part, attention must be given to the other parts. True, we *may* not misunderstand one portion of the Bible even though we study it by itself; but it is certain that we cannot have a complete understanding of it until we study it with reference to the Bible as a whole. This principle is as true of an entire book of the Bible as it is of a single text. There is no book of the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible. To say that any two books in the Bible have no connection, is almost equivalent to saying that the Bible is not all inspired by the same Spirit.

5. The Bible Is Consistent

Terms used in one place in the Bible, with a certain signification, must have the *same meaning* attached to them *in every other place* where they occur, provided the same subject is under consideration. If this be not true, then we have no certain means of knowing what the Bible teaches. Let us apply this principle. In the 8th chapter of *Daniel* we find a symbolic prophecy in which certain days are mentioned. Now to say that these days mean literal days of twenty-four hours each, would make nonsense of the prophecy, for we should have several great kingdoms covering a period of only a little more than six years. But in *Ezekiel* 4:3-6 we find another prophecy, also symbolic, in which a day is expressly declared to stand for a year. So we conclude that in every prophecy where a day is used as a symbol, it signifies a year.

In like manner we find horns used as a symbol in the 7th and 8th chapters of *Daniel*, in both of which chapters they are plainly declared to symbolize kingdoms. Therefore we justly conclude that whenever in the Bible a horn is used as a symbol, it represents a kingdom or nation.

Let the reader study these principles well, and get them fixed in his mind, and they will help him out of many a difficulty in his study of the Bible. We think these principles are sufficient for present consideration. Next week we shall present a few more that are equally important.

17. The Bible, Commentaries, and Tradition

Signs of the Times, January 13, 1887

LAST week we gave a few principles of interpretation and promised to add a few more this week. As what we now wish to give is very intimately related with what has already been given, we will first recall those points. We noted that:

1. The Bible is absolute truth and that anything that disagrees with it in the slightest particular must be false.
2. The Bible, though composed of many books, is one Book with one Author; that there is perfect harmony in all its parts.
3. The Bible contains all truth, because that by it a man may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works;”³⁴ and that therefore it must be its own interpreter.
4. One part of the Bible cannot be fully understood if taken out of its connection, or without reference to the Bible as a whole. There is no book in the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible.

On this point the following from Dr. P. S. Henson’s introduction to the book, *Christ in the Gospels*, is excellent:

In what we call the Bible, God has given us many books penned by many writers, each presenting such views of truth as his mental and spiritual nature made him specially adapted to be the vehicle of. Not that anyone of these Scripture writers was left to wander at his “own sweet will,” so that we must largely discount his deliverances on account of his human imperfections and the possibility of his misapprehending what the Lord would have him teach. That were indeed to undermine utterly the authority of the Scriptures, and “if the foundations be destroyed what shall the righteous do?”³⁵ We do most thoroughly and invincibly believe that “holy men of old spoke as they were moved

³⁴ 2 Timothy 3:17.

³⁵ Psalm 11:3.

by the Holy Ghost,"³⁶ and that therefore what they spoke may be absolutely relied upon.

But while we believe that all that each one said was truth, God's truth, we do not believe it was all the truth. You must have *all* that *all* of them said, in order to be sure that you have all the truth. "Which things we speak," writes the apostle Paul, "not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*."³⁷ And only by such collation and comparison can God's truth be comprehended in all the breadth and beauty of its meaning. You cannot obtain any accurate representation of a building by taking only a single view. As the photographer is accustomed to take two pictures, from a little different point of view, and when both these are looked at at once, as in a stereopticon, you see not two pictures, but one, and that not a flat surface such as each of the pictures shows, but a solid that stands out in its massiveness before your eyes. And yet even then you do not see the hinder part, but only half the building. To see it all in its completed symmetry, we should be obliged to have four views, and to look at them all at once. But this is, of course, impossible, inasmuch as we have not four eyes, but only two. But the principle applies, though its application be impossible.

Singularly enough there are just four Gospels. The metropolis, lies four square. Four pictures have we here of the matchless Man of Nazareth,—four pictures, and all so much alike that sometimes captious critics have said that there was only one original Gospel and the other three were copied from that. Four pictures, and yet all so different that other skeptical critics have alleged that there are glaring discrepancies in them that are hopelessly irreconcilable. The pictures, of course, must be *alike*, for all of them are pictures of Him. The pictures, of course, must be *unlike*, for each of the portrait painters had his own peculiar point of view. And yet it takes all four to give us the Christ of history in all the completeness of His humanity and divinity.

³⁶ 2 Peter 1:21.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:13.

This is just as true of the whole Bible as it is of the four Gospels. Lastly, we showed that:

5. A term used in one place in the Bible must have the same meaning in every other place where it occurs, especially if the same subject is under consideration.

Under the third proposition, that the Bible must interpret itself, we wish to say a few words on the use of commentaries. Commentaries may be a great help to the Bible student, or they may be a great curse. No matter how good a commentary may be, if a person relies implicitly upon it, taking all its statements as final upon any subject, he might better never see it, for he simply puts it in place of the Bible. Commentaries may be used only as they throw additional light on a point already established, or when the commentator leads to the understanding of a point, by unfolding to us the Bible evidence upon it.

Many persons will quote a decision from Barnes, or Scott, or Clark, or Olshausen, or some other person, and rest satisfied with that. Now allowing that their statement of the case is correct, of what use is it to us if they do not show us the steps by which they arrived at such a conclusion; or how can we know that their statement is correct if we do not have those steps? If the commentary does not lead us to the Bible then it is worse than useless. No matter how great a man may be, his opinion on a matter of Bible doctrine is of no account whatever unless it is backed by Bible evidence. And therefore in teaching others we should never quote commentaries for the purpose of biasing the mind or in any way influencing the judgment, before the Scripture has done its work. If a thing is true it may be proved by the Bible; if it cannot be proved by the Bible, it is of no consequence whatever, no matter who may hold it.

If a man relates to us an item of news, we almost invariably ask,
“How do you know?”

This does not necessarily indicate that we doubt his statement, but that we want to have the same ground for belief that he has. We should not be less anxious for trustworthy information on Bible subjects than we are on the news of the day.

If a commentator makes a statement, he is in duty bound to tell us why he makes it, and we should demand this before we accept it. Otherwise we cannot be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”³⁸ If the statement involves some duty, and we perform that duty, not knowing the full reason therefore, we shall be following some man, and not the Bible. The Bible then is the test of whether or not a man is a good commentator. If he proves every statement by comparing scripture with scripture, so that we can see for ourselves the reasonableness of his propositions, then his work becomes a blessing. If he does not, then, even though his statements be true, his work is of no account. He is like a man who climbs to the top of a building, and pulls up after him the ladder by which he ascended, but still expects others to follow him.

There is a growing and almost irresistible tendency to depreciate the value of plain Scripture statements. This is seen in the fact that when a direct Bible argument is given on some point that is new to the hearer, the first questions will almost invariably be,

“Who believes this? What men have advocated this view?”

Those who ask such questions are really exalting the human above the divine. They virtually say that the Bible needs human endorsement. We should have such confidence in the Bible that we will accept what it says no matter who, nor how many persons, may teach to the contrary.

Another point that should be firmly fixed, is that tradition should be wholly disregarded in interpreting the Bible. No matter how old a tradition may be, it should not be allowed to bias the judgment in the least. We cannot know whether tradition is true

³⁸ 2 Timothy 3:17.

or not until we compare it with the Bible; and since we have to first examine the Bible to ascertain the truth of tradition, it is evident that tradition can be of no help to us in interpreting the Bible. We must first understand the Bible, before we can know what credit to give to tradition.

Many people suppose that those who lived nearest to the time when the Bible was written, must have known a great deal more about the Bible than we can. The popular idea of this is expressed by Rev. James Chrystal in his *History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*, chap. 3, where, speaking of the testimony of holy Scripture, he says:

This is the source of doctrine, but it should ever be interpreted by the historical witness of the earliest ages of the church. In other words, in case a doubt should arise regarding the proper interpretation of a passage relating to a certain doctrine or rite, we should not despise the voice of the early successors of the apostles. It is a principle of common sense as well as of sound criticism that the historical witness of the Christians who lived the nearest the apostolic age, is of the greatest importance in determining the meaning of obscure or disputed passages of the New Testament.

But it should be remembered that the apostles had no “successors.” There have been a great many men who have lived since they did, but they have not been apostles. If nearness to the apostolic age gives extra light on the Bible, then those who lived at the same time that the apostles did ought to be still better guides than those who lived after they did; but we find that some of the gravest errors were taught by men who were contemporaries of the apostles. For a single example, see...

2 Timothy 2

¹⁷ And their word will eat as does a canker: of whom is Hy-
menaëus and Philetus;

¹⁸ Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

In closing this brief statement of principles, we would adopt the words of Dr. Killen, who speaks of the early church Fathers as follows:

It would seem as if the great Head of the church permitted these early writers to commit the grossest mistakes, and to propound the most foolish theories, for the express purpose of teaching us that we are not implicitly to follow their guidance. It might have been thought that authors, who flourished on the borders of apostolic times, knew more of the mind of the Spirit than others who appeared in succeeding ages; but the truths of Scripture, like the phenomena of the visible creation, are equally intelligible to all generations. If we possess spiritual discernment, the trees and the flowers will display the wisdom and the goodness of God as distinctly to us as they did to our first parents; and, if we have the “unction from the Holy One,”³⁹ we may enter into the meaning of the Scriptures as fully as did Justin Martyr or Irenaeus. To assist us in the interpretation of the New Testament, we have at command a critical apparatus of which they were unable to avail themselves. Jehovah is jealous of the honor of His word, and He has inscribed in letters of light over the labors of the most ancient interpreters, “*Cease from men.*”⁴⁰ The opening of the Scriptures, so as to exhibit their beauty, their consistency, their purity, their wisdom, and their power, is the clearest proof that the commentator is possessed of “the key of knowledge.”⁴¹ When tried by this test, Thomas Scott or Matthew Henry is better entitled to confidence than either Origen or Gregory Thaumaturgus. The Bible is its own safest expositor.

Psalms 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.⁴²

³⁹ 1 John 2:20.

⁴⁰ Isaiah 2:22.

⁴¹ Luke 11:52.

⁴² Killen, *The Ancient Church*, section 2, chapter 1, last paragraph.

18. Bible Justice Vindicated

Signs of the Times, January 20, 1887

IN A Spiritualist paper we find the following quotation from Pascal:

Nothing appears so revolting to reason as to say that the first man should impart guilt to those who, from their extreme distance from the source of evil, seem incapable of such a participation. This transmission seems to us not only unnatural, but unjust. For what can be more repugnant to the rules of our despicable justice than to condemn eternally an infant, yet irresponsible, for an offense in which he appears to have so little share, that was committed 6,000 years before he came into existence?

Doubtless many besides Spiritualists will adopt that language as their own, and will fancy that in so doing they are bringing an unanswerable argument against the doctrines of Christianity. But everybody who has read the Bible to any purpose knows full well that it does not teach that either infants or adults are condemned for an offense committed either 6,000 years or half as many minutes before they were born. Neither is one person condemned for the offense of another, no matter when that offense is committed. The Bible plainly declares:

Ezekiel 18

²⁰ The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

And the same thing was taught to the Jews in their earliest history. Thus:

Deuteronomy 24

¹⁶ The father shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

The Bible nowhere countenances the idea that one person shall suffer for the offense of another. But it does recognize the fact that a stream cannot rise higher than its source. If Adam had retained his purity, he would have begotten children with tendencies to right doing; but having fallen, his posterity must necessarily be born with tendencies to evil. This evil nature with which all men are born, is strengthened by evil practices, so that although...

Romans 5

¹² ...by one man sin came into the world,

—death justly passed upon all men,

¹² ...for that *all have sinned*.

To those who charge the Bible with partiality and injustice it may always be said,

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, not knowing the Scriptures.

19. Unconcealed Infidelity

Signs of the Times, March 10, 1887

BY THIS TERM we do not refer to the blasphemous rantings of Ingersoll, but to the infidelity that is preached from Christian pulpits and scattered broadcast by the religious press. There is scarcely a Bible doctrine, or a fact of sacred history that is not positively denied by some professing to be religious teachers. The Bible says that in six days God created the heaven and the earth; but that truth has been so long and so generally denied by religious teachers, that he who believes the simple Bible statement, is considered an old fogey. To believe the simple statement of the Bible is considered a mark of ignorance. Our attention has been especially directed to this matter of late by several noted instances of clerical infidelity, a few of which we will notice.

An English clergyman has recently published two books on "Christ and Christianity," in one of which, entitled *A Picture of Jesus*, the following version is given of the miracle at Cana:

The Virgin is evidently a little discomposed. The run on the wine is, no doubt, due to the people who came in the retinue of her Son. She cannot bear that members of her own family should put to shame the giver of the feast and so close a friend. "They have no wine, my dear Son—you see there are too many, in consequence of..." "Hush!" Jesus stops her, with exquisite sensibility and gentle courtesy. He will not have attention called to the fact of there being any deficiency.

No doubt Jesus and His disciples had brought wine enough, at least for themselves, *according to custom*. But now, is it not possible—even likely and Christlike—that with loving thoughtfulness, and knowing the extra concourse in consequence of His presence, Jesus may have said to His disciples, "If we go, we must not be burdensome to our friends; they are not rich; many will follow us; the sacred rights of hospitality, by which at least a season none may be excluded, must not be put to shame; take plenty of wine, and let it be *good*—the *best* wine. But don't let it be known; we must not do a kindness to get praise by others, at the expense

of wounding our host's feelings; let us so manage that, if possible, he may not even know that his wine ran short; let us leave our supply *outside*, it need only be used if called for, and then served up out of the *host's own pots*. The water pots at the door are sure to be empty by that time, it will be most convenient to put our wine in them at the right moment, and no one will be likely to notice that it is not the host's own wine."

So when the wine "runs short," Jesus himself steals away from the feast—the servants quickly get in the wine, fill up the water pots under His directions—and the whole had been done so quietly that the first thing noticed is that wine is being poured out of pots usually containing water. Some noticed *that*; the *servants*, we are told, knew about it, and could have been the real explanation; but the *ruler* of the feast did not even know that the wine had failed; he only noticed that what was now served was the best wine.

The above was written by one who writes "Rev." before his name; and we have seen it printed in a prominent denominational journal, without a word of dissent. Instead of being called a picture of Jesus, his book should have been entitled "a Caricature of Jesus." For no one who has ever read the simple narrative in the 2nd chapter of *John*, could believe that the one who wrote the paragraph above had any other motive than to ridicule the Bible account. The evangelist plainly states that the servants, at the command of Jesus, filled the six stone water-pots, and as plainly states that that water was made wine; yet this man professing to give a picture of Jesus, has represented Him as using deception in order to perpetrate a very clumsy trick. It is not simply that the miracle is denied, but Jesus is represented as being actually dishonest. No professed infidel ever did more to bring the Bible into disrepute by his coarse jokes upon it, than has this professed minister of the gospel. We cannot believe that a man who presents Jesus in such a light as he does, can have any faith in Him or in the Bible.

In its issue of December 9, the *Christian Union* reprints an article from the *Popular Science Monthly*, which begins thus:

There is no weed weedier or more ubiquitous than the common thistle. In Paradise, it is true, if we may trust John Milton and the Sunday-school books—wise, as usual, beyond what is written—there were no thorns or thistles.

The one who wrote that has read the Bible to little purpose, if he has read it at all, or else he doesn't accept the Bible as final authority on any subject. The Bible says that at the close of creation,

Genesis 1

³¹ God saw everything that He had made, and, behold it was very good.

Thorns and thistles are not good. Also we are told that...

Genesis 2

⁹ Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.

And the growth of thorns and thistles is expressly declared to have been the direct consequence of the sin of our first parents:

Genesis 3

¹⁷ And unto Adam He [God] said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it; cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you.

It would be well if many who nowadays presume to write upon Bible subjects had as much knowledge of the Bible as John Milton had; better still if they believed it as fully as he did. The quotation which implies that thistles grew from the beginning, and were in Eden, is perfectly in keeping with the rapidly-increasing tendency to leave God out of the account altogether, and to hold that the world evolved itself.

Again, in the *Christian Union* of January 20, the editor, Lyman Abbott, makes an exhibition of infidelity in his comments on the current Sunday school lesson. The lesson is upon the call of

Abram, *Genesis* 12:1-9, and is entitled “The Faith of Abram.” We make a few quotations from the article:

And so he went out, “not knowing, whither he went;” not knowing, I may add, by whom he was led. He went by faith, obedient to the command of that inward sense which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. He crossed the Euphrates, passed over the desert and entered the unknown land which he determined should be his home. He pitched his tent and built an altar near to what afterward became Bethel; and initiated his entrance in a new country by a new worship. He called, it is said, upon the name of the gods. In treating this ancient history we are almost wholly in the land of conjecture; the conjecture is reasonable that he first introduced into use, and so into the Hebrew Scriptures, the plural form *Elohim*, the gods, as a method of expressing his faith that the many lords and gods of the Chaldaic religion were but different names or expressions for the one God who is the Master and Maker of all. As Paul commended the altar to the unknown God, and whom the Athenians unknowingly worshiped proceeded to declare unto them, so Abraham, not attacking even by implication the polytheistic beliefs of his father’s house, grouped in thought all the gods of the earth and the heavens together, and took the first step up toward a true monotheistic worship by calling on the name of the gods, as though in the many he would recognize but One.

Some persons may see in the above a sample of advanced theology, but we can see only a sample of advanced infidelity. The Scripture says,

Romans 4

³ Abraham believed God;

—Lyman Abbott says that Abraham was not sure that there was any God. The Scripture tells us the simple facts about the call of Abraham, where he was when he was called, how old he was, where he went, and where he stopped on the way, and the instances connected with his journey; Lyman Abbott says,

...in treating this ancient history we are almost wholly in the land of conjecture.

We submit that the only room there is for conjecture is by ignoring the Bible narrative. The writer of the above conjectures that because the word “*Elohim*” is used (not however by Abraham, but by Moses, the historian), therefore Abraham had the gods of Chaldea in mind when he built the altar and worshiped at Bethel. He might as reasonably conjecture that Moses had the many gods of the Egyptians in mind when he wrote,

Genesis 1

¹ In the beginning God [*Elohim*] created the heavens and the earth.

But the writer continues:

Of course I am well aware that there are able theological writers who suppose that modern theology was furnished to Adam in Eden, and to Abraham in Ur, and to whom this whole rendering of Abraham's immigration will seem secular, if not profane. To them the plural *Elohim* is an evidence that Abraham believed in the Trinity, and his erection of an altar is conclusive proof that he comprehended the atonement. If religion is something external to man, we may certainly conceive it prepared ready-made and given to him, like the dress of skins which the Lord God made for Adam and Eve in the garden. But if religion is character, if it is what man *is*, not what he *has*, in the crude and ruder states of human development, religion must be simple and crude in its forces; then, as we are content to teach our children the very simplest truths concerning God, and their duty toward Him, and their right of trust in Him, so we not only may, but we must, think God has taught the race.

The trouble is that his theory does not allow that God is the author of religion. In fact, it ignores God entirely. Instead of allowing that God is the teacher of the race, it makes man his own teacher, and religion something that is evolved from his own inner consciousness. If religion is not something external to man, then it is only human and not divine. The Bible says that...

Romans 10

¹⁷ ...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;

—but the writer of the above paragraph, in claiming that religion is something that is developed within the individual man, being crude at first, but becoming more perfect as the man becomes better educated, does away entirely with the necessity for a God. His theory is infidelity pure and simple.

To show that this charge is well founded, and that the editor of the *Christian Union* has in his comments entirely ignored God, we make one more quotation:

So perhaps from this simple story we may get a simple and clear idea of what is that calling and election which has been a theological trouble to so many minds. Abraham was the first in the long line of God's "chosen people;" and he is himself designated in the Bible as "called" and "chosen." We are called whenever we feel within an inspiration to a higher life or to some special divine action; we make our calling and election sure when we are obedient to the voice divine.

To listen to and obey this voice is faith. Abraham "believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness."⁴³ Abraham's creed at this time, if I have read his story correctly, must have been of the simplest kind. He could have believed in no Bible, for he had none; in no divine, atoning Saviour, for he had apparently been told of none; there is nothing to indicate that he knew anything about the future state, nor anything more about God than a general conviction that *Elohim* was one, not many. He knew less than the Magi who followed the star. But, like them, he followed. His inward convictions were very few; what they revealed to him was very simple; but he followed them whithersoever they might lead him.

We have in the above at least one direct contradiction of the Bible. Paul says⁴⁴ that the Gospel that was preached to Abraham, and that the covenant that God made with him was confirmed in

⁴³ *Genesis* 15:6.

⁴⁴ *Galatians* 3:8, 17.

Christ; Lyman Abbott says that Abraham had no belief in a divine atonement, because he had been told of none. But even worse than this is his theory of the call of God, and his comment on the statement that Abraham believed God. This call, we are told, was simply inward inspiration; and his faith was simply obedience to the promptings of his own heart.

The Bible says that...

Romans 4

³ Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness;

—but we are told that what he believed was simply an impulse from within; therefore we must conclude if we except Dr. Abbott's theory, that the God that Abraham worshiped was himself; and that his faith being counted to him for righteousness was simply his own self-approval! This is the doctrine of Spiritualists and infidels. We never picked up a Spiritualist paper that does not counsel its readers to follow the promptings of their own heart. If following one's inward convictions wherever they may lead him, with no regard for a supernatural revelation, were what is meant by faith, then there would be multitudes of people upon the earth who could truly claim to be children of faithful Abraham. But that is not faith; nothing is safe except obedience to the plainly expressed will of God.

It is a matter of very little importance what any single individual believes. We have no controversy with Lyman Abbott. If he wishes to believe that the Bible is a myth, he has that privilege, but we cannot help feeling righteously indignant when we think that such stuff as we have quoted is sent out to tens of thousands of Sunday-school scholars, many of whom will accept it as legitimate comment upon the Scripture. It is a terrible pity that honest students of the Bible cannot be allowed to receive the pure and unadulterated word of God.

The blindness and infidelity concerning the Scriptures that we find among men in high position, is simply appalling. Yet people will say,

“If the seventh day and not the first is the Sabbath, why have not these learned ministers of the gospel found it out and preached it?”

We reply, If the Bible is the inspired word of God, why have not these men found it out and why do they not preach it, instead of teaching their own vain imagination? When a man can pervert simple Bible and history as has been done in the quotations we have made, it is not surprising that he cannot see a scriptural duty which interferes with his convenience. And yet these men, notwithstanding their unconcealed infidelity, will be blindly followed by thousands.

20. The Old Is Better

Signs of the Times, April 14, 1887

1. Please explain how you harmonize the fourteenth verse of *Revelation* 22, and the comments upon it, found in *Signs*, March 24, p. 186,⁴⁵ with the same verse as given in the *New Version*, which reads, “Blessed are they that wash their robes,” etc.

THERE are some things that we don't try to harmonize; we try to follow the simple truth, and if anything differs from it, that is not a matter that troubles us. In this case we accept the reading of the *Authorized Version* as preferable to that of the *New*, and let the matter rest there.

It may seem strange, however, that the two versions, each the work of men skilled in the languages, should have such widely different renderings of the same text. A little explanation will make the matter clear. The Greek of the text as rendered in the *Authorized Version* is, *poiountes tas entolas autou*. As given in the *Revised Version* it is, *plunontes, tas stolas auton*. It will be seen that the difference in the words is very slight, so that a copyist might easily make the substitution of one for the other. If the reader has ever seen *facsimiles* of some of the ancient manuscripts, he will the more readily understand how such a change might have taken place. As the result, some of the ancient manuscripts have it one way, and some another. The similar expression in *Revelation* 7:14 may have been in the mind of the ancient copyist, thus causing him unconsciously and mechanically to make the substitution. Griesbach regards the reading followed by the *New Version* as

⁴⁵ PP Editor's note: The article is titled “Thy Will Be Done,” and is in *Signs of the Times*, March 24, 1877. I have put this article in the collection, *The Lord's Prayer*. But to explain: the question is concerning *Revelation* 22:14, which in the *KJV* (the “Old Version”) reads: “Blessed are they that do His commandments...” but in the *Revised Version* (the “New Version”) reads: “Blessed are they that wash their robes...”

“not to be despised,” but worthy of further examination, “though inferior to the received text.”

But while following the *Authorized Version*, we do not find, in this instance, the slightest lack of harmony between the two renderings. It is a fact that only those who keep the commandments of God, will be permitted to partake of the tree of life. *Matthew* 7:21, 19:17, and many other texts, settle this matter positively. It is also true that none will be saved, except those who wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb; for...

1 John 1

⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin;

—and...

1 John 3

⁵ [Christ] was manifested to take away our sin.

Now:

1. No one can keep the commandments without the help of Christ, whose blood cleanses from sin; and
2. No one can stand, having his robes white, without being a doer of the commandments; for it is sin that defiles, and if one should break the commandments his robes would not be white.

Thus they who have kept the commandments of God, and they whose robes are made white, are the same. A blessing pronounced upon those who have kept the commandments of God, is at the same time a blessing pronounced upon those who have washed their robes white. So there is harmony in the two renderings, after all.

2. Also please state whether the *New Version* is correct in giving the word “probation” where the *Old Version* has “experience,” in *Romans* 5:4.

We think it is not, for the following reasons: The Greek word signifies both a test, a trial, and also that which results from such a test. Therefore “experience” is an allowable rendering. Now to render it “experience,” as in the *Authorized Version*, makes good sense, for it comports with the facts in the case: patient endurance of tribulation does work out rich experience. But “patience” indicates that the individual is undergoing a testing, a probation, and therefore it does not seem consistent to say that this “tribulation and patience work probation,” when they are themselves a probation. Therefore we decidedly prefer the old rendering,

Romans 5

³ ...tribulation works patience;

⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

⁵ And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

The revisers have given us a good commentary, but they seem often to have been more intent on getting something new than on retaining the simplicity and directness of the sacred text.

21. The Days of Creation

Signs of the Times, May 26, 1887

IN THE notes on the current *International Sunday-school Lesson*, we find the following comment on the expression,

Exodus 20

¹¹ For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth...

Not in six periods of twenty-four hours; for during the first three, when the sun was not made, there were no such twenty-four-hour days. But divine days (doubtless long periods), beginning from the darkness, and going on with the dawn, or beginning, and to their full maturity.

The writer thinks that the only reason why the days of creation were not 24-hour days was because (as he says) the sun was not created till after the third was passed. That would imply that after the sun was created the days might be literal days. But if the remaining days were literal days, the first then must have been literal also. Now it is a matter of fact that the sun was made to rule the day; and it would be doing gross violence to the language to say that the word “day” in *Genesis* 1:16 means anything different from what it does in every other place where it occurs in the same chapter. But the sun does not rule an indefinite period of time, but simply a twenty-four-hour day. Hence, the days of creation were literal days such as we are familiar with, of which it takes seven to make a week.

Moreover, the first three days were days of twenty-four hours, just the same as the last four, and every day since. The day is not made by the sun but by the revolution of the earth on its axis, and the earth could revolve if the sun and moon did not shine. The language indicates that this was the case. There was “the first day,” “the second day,” and “the third day.” Each of these days was composed of a period of darkness succeeded by a period of light, but the sun did not shine. And the sun and moon were made to be light-bearers, to rule the day and night. The sun was made to rule

the day. What day? The day which was already formed by the revolution of the earth on its axis, and which could henceforth be more distinctly marked than before.

It is a mistaken idea that the sun was not created till the fourth day. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The sun and moon were created “in the beginning,” on the first day, but were not made to be light-bearers until the fourth day. And probably they were not made to assume their present shape until that time.

There is not a single argument that can be deduced to show that the days of creation were not literal days. The obvious meaning of the text requires that they should be so considered. It is a forced and awkward assumption which makes them long periods,—an assumption which was devised by certain devotees of “science falsely so-called,”⁴⁶ in order to avoid excepting the simple truth of the Bible, and which is followed by certain professors of religion, and in order to avoid keeping the Sabbath of the Lord.

⁴⁶ 1 Timothy 6:20.

22. Blessed Are They That Do

Signs of the Times, June 9, 1887

IT IS PROBABLE that there is no word in the Bible the meaning of which is more generally misunderstood than the word “conversation.” The reason is that the meaning of the word has changed since the *Authorized Version* was made, and the word is now used in a much more restricted sense than it was used with reference to one’s general deportment. From a failure to recognize the fact that the word is used in the Bible in a sense which is now obsolete, many lose very much of the force of the texts in which it occurs. A little examination of the principal texts in which the word is found cannot fail to be profitable, on account of the practical truths which they contain.

The first time the word occurs in the Bible is:

Psalms 37

¹⁴ The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

The margin has the correct rendering:

¹⁴ ...the upright of way.

The idea of this text is the same as that of verse 12:

¹² The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth;

—or that stated by Paul in *2 Timothy* 3:12:

2 Timothy 3

¹² All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

In *Psalms* 50:23 we have the word again:

Psalms 50

²³ Whoso offers praise glorifies me; and to him that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.

Here, as before, the correct idea is given in the margin. It should read:

Psalm 50 [margin]

²³ ...to him that disposes his way aright, will I show the salvation of God.

This gives a much broader meaning to the text. When we remember that the Judgment will take cognizance not only of words and actions, but of the thoughts, we find that the word here rendered “conversation” covers every duty. They who dispose their way aright, are...

Psalm 119

¹ ...the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord,

—and the promise in *Psalm* 50:23 is equivalent to the statements in *Matthew* 19:17 and *Revelation* 22:14, that they who keep the commandments will be saved.

The next occurrence of the word is in *Galatians* 1:13:

Galatians 1

¹³ For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.

Here it is absolutely impossible that the word should be limited to talk. Paul’s wasting of the church of God was not idle talk, but stern reality. He says that his “conversation” when he professed the Jews’ religion was to persecute the church.

Again we read:

Ephesians 4

²² That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

Here it is obvious that “manner of life,” as it is in the revised version, or “practices,” as the Syriac version has it, expresses the sense much more perfectly. The “old man” is the “body of sin,”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Romans* 6:6.

and Paul means that the “former conversation” which is to be “put off,” is the past course of sin. In contrast with this “conversation” which is to be “put off,” is the...

Ephesians 4

²⁴ ...new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,

–which is to be “put on.” “Righteousness and true holiness” do not consist of talk, but of deeds, and so that which is “put off” to make room for these, consists of deeds.

The same meaning attaches to the word in *Ephesians* 2:3, where the apostle, after speaking of the children of disobedience, says:

Ephesians 2

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.

He does not mean that once we simply talked with the children of disobedience, but that our manner of life, including words, thoughts, and actions, was the same as theirs.

1 Timothy 4:12 shows that the word means more than simply talk. Paul exhorts Timothy to be an example...

1 Timothy 4

¹² ...in word, in conversation, in charity.

“In word” covers all that he may say, but “in conversation” indicates the whole behavior. It is not enough that a minister should talk well both in the pulpit and out, but his behavior must correspond.

In the 13th of *Hebrews* the word occurs twice. In verse 5 we read:

Hebrews 13

⁵ Let your conversation be without covetousness.

Covetousness is a sin of the mind, and not of words. The rendering,

“Be free from the love of money,”

—or,

“Let your turn of mind be free from love of money,”

—is much more in accordance with the nature of covetousness, and with the exhortation which immediately follows,

Hebrews 13

⁵ ...and be content with such things as you have.

Verse 7 of *Hebrews* 13 might with more reason be thought to have reference to words, if we did not know that the usage of the Bible is in favor of a more comprehensive application. When the Bible was translated, it is not probable that the word “conversation” was rendered in its present limited sense. It was then used in the sense of the Latin word from which it is derived, namely “turning about,” indicating all the turns of one’s life, or in other words his way or manner of life. So in this text when the apostle says,

⁷ Remember them which have the rule over you,...considering the end of their conversation,

—he means that we should consider the object of their manner of life,—why it is that they live as they do. The same thought is expressed in *Philippians* 3:17; *1 Corinthians* 4:16; *1 Thessalonians* 1:6.

In *1 Peter* 1:15, 18 it is very clear that if “manner of life” or “conduct” be substituted for “conversation,” the text will read more smoothly, and the one who has always limited the word “conversation” to mere talk, will find a deeper meaning to the text than ever before.

In *2 Peter* 2:7 it is very evident if we regard the context that something more than talk is meant. The text says that just Lot was...

2 Peter 2

⁷ ...vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

Now there can be no doubt but that the Sodomites were obscene and vulgar in their talk, but verse 8 is explanatory of verse 7, and that says:

⁸ For that righteous man dwelling among them, *in seeing and hearing*, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their *unlawful deeds*.

Here it is shown that the word “conversation” covers both speaking and doing. In this connection it is well to remember that...

Matthew 12

³⁴ ...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,

—and that as a man...

Proverbs 23

⁷ ...thinks in his heart, so is he.

So if a man's words are evil, it is very certain that his deeds will be no better.

2 Peter 3

¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

—is often quoted to show that in these last days our talk ought to be pure and elevated. So it ought, but the text teaches vastly more than that. Many people whose talk is faultless will be left outside the kingdom of God. What Peter wants to impress is the thought that in view of the soon coming of Christ our whole conduct should be holy.

The faulty rendering of *Philippians* 3:20 has caused many, perhaps the majority of persons, to lose the force and beauty of that text. It reads:

Philippians 3

²⁰ For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now our talk may be of a heavenly nature, or about heavenly things, but it would be absolutely impossible for us to have it in Heaven unless we ourselves were there. When we get to Heaven, our talk will of necessity be there, but not till then. The word here rendered “conversation” is *politeuma*, and means “commonwealth,” or “citizenship.” The reader will no doubt at a glance see the truth of this, since *politeuma* must bring to his mind the word “political,” which has reference to governments.

In the passage in which this text occurs, the apostle tells the brethren how they ought to walk, or live. The reason why we should not live like the enemies of the cross of Christ, but should reach forth unto those things which are before, is that this world is not our home, but that our citizenship is in Heaven, and we should live as would become people of such high birth. We are not dwellers here upon this earth, therefore we should not live...

Ephesians 2

² ...according to the course of this world;

—but if we have been born of the Spirit, we are only sojourners here. In Heaven we have an enduring substance,

Hebrews 11

¹⁰ ...a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

If we are “called to be saints,”⁴⁸ we are sons of God, and ought to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. If we should live like the children of disobedience, we should deny our royal birth. The thought that our citizenship is in Heaven, that our names are enrolled in the Great Register of that country, should lead us to study the laws of that place, that we may know how to conduct ourselves when we go there. And since we cannot conduct ourselves properly there unless we have learned how

⁴⁸ Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2.

here, it follows that a proper understanding of this text constantly borne in mind will serve as a great incentive to holy living. This is the only place in the Bible where the word rendered “conversation” has this meaning.

These are not all the instances of the occurrence of the word “conversation” in the common version, but they are the principal ones. It is not merely as a matter of curiosity that one should understand the proper sense of this word in the various places where it occurs, but that he may get the full meaning of the texts in which it is found. Let us be careful not to narrow the sense of the Scriptures, nor give words a meaning which they do not possess. Let us also remember that the Bible lays far more stress on deeds than on words; for while a good talker may be a very poor liver, it will invariably be the case that...

Matthew 12

³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things.

The man whose works are committed to the Lord, will have his thoughts established; and the man whose thoughts are pure will talk accordingly.

23. Is There Room Enough?

Signs of the Times, June 30, 1887

It is asserted that there is not room enough on the earth for all the people who have ever lived on it. Is there anything in print on the subject? – *J. M. D.*

YES; the folly of assertion has been shown scores of times, yet it is made with as much confidence as ever. It is a standing objection with infidels against the possibility of a general resurrection, and evinces just about as much learning as the usual run of infidel objections to the Bible. We think that the falsity of the assertion will be apparent to all who read the following brief calculation:

The present population of the world is, in round numbers, 1,400,000,000. The earth has been standing about six thousand years. It is true that many people claim that the earth is much older, but they do not claim that it has been inhabited by man for a much longer period. Now we will allow that the entire population has changed every thirty years, and that there were just as many people the first thirty years and every thirty years after, as there are now. This is an exceedingly liberal allowance, for there were but two people in the beginning, and but eight after the flood. The whole number of people, then that have lived on the earth, would be 1,000,000,000,000 or 2,000,000,000,000. Now if we should allow each one of these people a square rod of land for standing room, they would occupy only 2,734,316 square miles. The area of the United States and Territories is 3,442,198 square miles. Therefore all the people who have ever lived on the earth could be accommodated in the United States, with ample room for everyone and there would be more than 800,000 square miles of land to spare.

Don't be afraid when infidels prate about the impossibility of things which the Bible says shall take place. There was never an infidel assertion that could stand for a moment against the Bible.

All the arguments brought to bear in the Bible have had less effect than so many feathers would have upon the rock of Gibraltar.



24. Bible Study

Signs of the Times, October 20, 1887

THESE is a vast difference between reading and studying. A person may read the Bible through a hundred times and still know really nothing about it, and may not be able to quote a single verse correctly. To learn a passage or chapter by heart, even, is not necessarily studying; it may be simply parrot work. To study means to closely examine; to apply the mind to a certain thing; to read and examine for the purpose of learning or understanding. A person may be able to relate, when questioned, everything that is recorded in a certain chapter, without having given it any real study. He may learn the bare facts without that close examination that is required to understand the lesson which they are designed to convey.

A person has learned a thing only when he has made it his own—a part of himself; when he can add to things which he has previously learned, and see the relation between them; or when he has it fixed in his mind as a nucleus, around which to gather other facts. The Bible is a book in which the writings of many individuals, covering many hundreds of years, unite to form one harmonious whole. All the different Bible writers have one common object in view; there is a oneness of purpose seen in all their writings. No one portion of the Bible can be isolated from the rest, and its meaning be fully grasped. It is only when we compare Scripture with Scripture, that we get the full benefit of Bible study. If the text of a Sabbath-school lesson is found in a certain chapter, and the pupil confines his attention to that chapter alone, he has not thoroughly studied his lesson. The texts bearing on one subject should be treasured up in the mind, and others added to them, and woven together like the various threads of a fabric, till the whole subject stands out clear and distinct. Then the relation of different subjects should be kept in mind.

In this way a given amount of study will accomplish vastly more good than the same amount of study without any definite purpose. Of course it will take time to arrive at even a moderate understanding of all the great truths of God's word, and for this very reason the time should be improved to the best advantage. With persevering study, however, and the wisdom which is promised to those who pray in faith, even the most unlearned may become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, which alone are able to make us...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...wise unto salvation—

¹⁷ ...thoroughly furnished unto all good works.



25. Explaining Miracles

Signs of the Times, December 22, 1887

MANY very good persons have in the past been zealous to explain the miracles of the Bible. Of late years the number of these zealous souls have been increasing. Their motive is a laudable one, for they think that if they can take out of the way of infidels some of the difficulties of the Bible, and thus remove their objections to that book, many will accept its teachings. But however honest the motive may be, it is certain that they are engaged in a thankless task. If they knew the cause of infidelity, they would not think to cure it by such methods; and if they would stop to consider, they would see that if it were possible to explain the miracles of the Bible, there would be no inducement for an infidel or anybody else to accept its teachings.

Miracles lie at the very foundation of the gospel, and are the principal part of its superstructure. The very existence of God is a miracle; the creation of the world was a miracle; the fact that it is upheld by the same word that brought it into existence, is a miracle; our own existence is a miracle; and the plan of redemption is a stupendous miracle. A belief in miracles underlies all knowledge, and all true science. The first element of knowledge is to perceive that things exist. Before any advancement whatever can be made in science, the fact that things exist must be accepted. And this requires no reasoning, for we cannot help believing it. But the apostle says:

Hebrews 11

³ Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

We look at the heavens and the earth, and ask,

“How were they framed?”

And the answer is, God formed them out of nothing; He created the matter which composes them:

Psalm 33

⁹ He spoke, and it was; He commanded and it stood fast.

By His own word He caused matter to exist where the instant before there was nothing. Who can understand this? Nobody. It is a miracle; but the acceptance of it by faith underlies all true science.

But the devotee of “science falsely so-called,”⁴⁹ attempts to account for the existence of the worlds in some other way. He says that all these things which we see were evolved from a single particle of matter. But when he has gone back to that atom, which, as he claims, has by repeated self-multiplication, produced the worlds, he is still confronted by the question,

“How did this atom come into existence?”

And he can never get back of that “How?” So after all his contempt for miracles, he bases his theories on a greater miracle than does the believer in the word of God. For he assumes that inanimate matter created itself out of nothing; while the Bible brings to view an intelligent Creator.

Suppose that our zealous friends should, by some miracle, succeed in explaining the miracles of the Bible; would the infidel then accept that book? Certainly not; for all reason for accepting it would be taken away. The Bible would then have been brought down to the level of man; it would be nothing more than any man could produce. We might go further, and say that if it were possible to explain the miracles of the Bible, there would be no God in whom to believe. The very existence of God implies the existence of miracles. God could not be God, and not work miracles. An infinite God *must* do things which are above the comprehension of a finite mind. They are not miracles to God; there can be no miracles to Him,—for He simply does His own will. But the simplest

⁴⁹ 1 Timothy 6:20.

acts of God must necessarily be above the comprehension of man. If it were not so, man would be equal to God. That the simplest acts of God are beyond human comprehension is demonstrated every day, in the growth of plants, the sunshine, the rain, and a thousand other things which we think we understand, because they are so common, but which no man can explain. We know that under certain conditions, certain results will follow; but why? God alone can answer.

And so it is a mistaken zeal which prompts one to try to explain the miracles of the Bible. No man can do it, but the very attempt to do so tends to lower God and the Bible in the estimation of unbelievers. It tends to make them think that God does not work in so very mysterious a way after all. Moreover, when believers attempt to explain miracles, the world accepts that attempt as an evidence that everything that God has done may be understood; and consequently when they read of something that absolutely defies comprehension, they reject it as false.

The reason why men are infidels is not because of the difficulties in the Bible, but because of the difficulties in their own hearts. When men lost the knowledge of God, it was not because they had nothing to reveal God to them, but...

Romans 1

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.

The fault was all in themselves. It is an evil heart of unbelief that causes men to depart from God, and it is the same thing that keeps them from coming to Him.

Says the apostle:

Hebrews 11

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He *is*.

This proposition is self-evident. No one can come to God unless he first believes in the existence of God. And no one believes in the existence of God if he has conjured up in his mind some image to take the place of God, which is totally unlike God. And he who believes that God is, must believe in His power to work miracles. More than this, he must believe in the absolute necessity for the performance of miracles, because from the very nature of the case the infinite God must do things that are too wonderful for man to comprehend.

The fact that God is a wonder-working God is the great source of consolation to the Christian. To be sure the Christian rests in the promises of God, but what would those promises avail if infinite power were not behind them. When Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel, He fortified them with the assurance,

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

And thousands have read the promises of God, and have confidently rested in them, because of the words:

Deuteronomy 33

²⁶ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the heaven in your help, and in His excellency on the sky.

²⁷ The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

The miracles of the Bible are not to be explained, but believed. Our belief in them is the measure of our belief in God. We believe that God exists, that He is the Creator of all things, and accepting this fact, we do not find it at all difficult to believe that He caused the shadow on the dial of Ahaz to turn backward; that He caused the sun to stand still in the heavens, so that one day was as long as two; that He divided the Red Sea, and the River Jordan; that He

caused iron to swim, and made the dumb ass speak with human voice; that He preserved Jonah alive three days in the whale's belly; or that He raised the dead. Why should He not do such things?

Psalm 115

³ Our God is in the heavens; He has done whatsoever He would.

He made all things; why should we suppose that He has less power to control than He had in creating? No; it is the most natural thing in the world for our God to do wonderful things, because He is a wonderful God.

So we do not seek to explain any miracles; we cannot afford to waste time in so fruitless a task. And we know of no better way to convince infidels of the truth of the Bible than to put before them its plain declarations. The promises of God are not to those who understand them, but to those who believe them. Men may say that they can't believe; it is not so; they can believe; they *must* believe or else be lost; for...

Mark 16

¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.

26. The Deep Things of God

Signs of the Times, December 22, 1887

WHEN a man has gazed into the starry heavens through a telescope, he has an idea of depth that he never had before. Let him, for instance, point his telescope toward some portion of the Milky Way, where to the naked eye only a faint haze is visible, and he will see not only countless multitudes of stars, but will be impressed with the fact that there is an infinite depth beyond, which the strongest telescope cannot fathom.



Suppose now that as the enthusiastic astronomer is dilating upon the wonders of the starry worlds, someone should say to him,

“Oh! you see more in the heavens than is really there; those little shining specks are not so important as you think they are,

but you have been gazing at them so intently for so long a time that everything is magnified to your vision.”

Almost any intelligent person would tell such a one that it is impossible to overestimate the extent and wonders of the heavens; that the telescope magnifies nothing, but simply helps us to get an approximate idea of the actual size of the heavenly bodies; and that it is just as impossible for any man to comprehend the vastness of the universe as it is for him to comprehend God.

This train of thought was suggested by one who, after a conversation upon the law of God, said:

“You have been studying the subject so long that, to you, everything is magnified. It is always the case that when one thinks on a certain subject a great deal, little things assume an importance which they do not actually possess.”

Is this true? Can a person look into the perfect law of liberty so intently that some portions of it will assume undue proportions? Many who would agree with us in our statement concerning the heavens, will agree with our friend in his statement concerning the law; but it can be shown that the human mind can no more fathom the depths of the divine law, than it can compass the bounds of the universe.

If the law were of human origin it could be fathomed, for what one finite mind has evolved, another finite mind can comprehend. But who can know the Almighty to perfection?⁵⁰ And the law of God is the righteous will of God.⁵¹ It is a transcript of His own character. This fact alone should convince anyone that there is no danger of overestimating any portion of it.

Things of human origin may often be comprehended at a glance, and then if one spends time poring over them, minor points assume undue importance. But the Scriptures, which are a commentary on the law, must be searched in order to be under-

⁵⁰ *Job* 11:7.

⁵¹ *Romans* 2:18.

stood. One may imagine that his casual glance has enabled him to grasp all that is contained in a passage, and it may seem to him that there is little in it; but Paul says:

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

And he says:

¹⁰ But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

These deep things of God are revealed only to those who have Christ, for in Him...

Colossians 2

³ ...are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The psalmist David did not think there was any danger of thinking upon the law so much as to unduly exalt any portion of it, for he said:

Psalms 1

¹ Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.

And of himself he said,

Psalms 119

⁹⁷ O how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day.

“God is love;”⁵² all men who profess to know God, make much of this fact. His love is infinite, because He is love, and He is infinite. But no man can understand any more of the love of God than he does of the law of God, for the love of God runs parallel with His law. The love of God is just as extensive as His law, and

⁵² 1 John 4:16.

no more so. Just consider: His law is a law of love, and we read that it was in love that He gave it to men.⁵³ He desires that all men should have life; but they cannot have life unless they are like Him; for only those who are like God can dwell in His presence, and soon the glory of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.⁵⁴ Then those who are not like God will be destroyed. But no man can see God, so as to know what it is to be like Him, and so God has given us His law,—the transcript of His character,—that we, by conforming to it, may be like Him, and so have life. Thus the law was ordained to life. The angels who have never sinned, but who...

Psalm 103

²⁰ ...do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word,

—have life for that reason. But as for men,

Romans 3

²³ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 5

⁸ [And] God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Why did Christ die? He himself answers:

John 3

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 John 3

⁴ Sin is the transgression of the law,

Romans 6

²³ [And] the wages of sin is death.

⁵³ *Deuteronomy* 33:2-3.

⁵⁴ *Habakkuk* 2:14; *Isaiah* 11:9.

Hence we know that all men were doomed to death, because they had trampled upon the law of life, and God in His great love for them gave His only begotten Son, in order that they might, through faith in Him, escape that awful fate. We say that this was infinite love; that in that one gift God gave all that Heaven had to bestow; and that the infinite power of God himself could do no more for guilty man than He has done. But would God take steps that were unnecessary? To give up His own Son was a sacrifice that a finite mind can never understand; would He have made that sacrifice if man could have been redeemed by any easier way? No, indeed; the love of God was no greater than was necessary to satisfy the righteous demands of His broken law. But that love was infinite; therefore the law itself is infinite. The love of God in Christ helps us to understand the law; the law of God, carefully studied, helps us to understand the love of God. Both work together.

The danger with men is that they will take too narrow and too shallow views of the law, and not that they will get too exalted ideas of its breadth and depth. Christ came to earth to...

Isaiah 42

²¹ ...magnify the law, and make it honorable.

He did not make it larger than it was before, but exhibited it in His life, so that its hidden beauties might stand out prominent. He was the living embodiment of the law. He who studies the character of Christ, with a longing desire and an earnest purpose to emulate it, is studying the deep things of God,—the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,—that are hidden in Him. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we learn that the greatest things in the law are those things which to the natural mind appear trivial, or which do not appear at all; and with the psalmist we cry to the Lord,

Psalms 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

1889–1892



1. Continue

Signs of the Times, February 4, 1889

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ But continue in the things which you have learned, and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them.

THUS wrote the apostle Paul to his son Timothy. There are thousands of honest souls who would be well off if they would but heed that injunction. It would seem to be the most natural thing in the world to do, and yet there are few who do it. If a man has learned a thing, and is assured of it, it would seem as though he would cling to that under all circumstances; the more the clouds and mists gathered about him, the more that darkness covered his way, making it almost impossible to discern anything, the more closely should he cling to those things that he has been assured of.

Usually, however, the contrary is just the case. A person is as well assured of some things as he can possibly be of his own existence, but suddenly he is confronted by something which he does not know how to “harmonize” with what he already has. The new thing may be only a specter, but it has proved sufficient to frighten him from all that is substantial.

There are a great many who can never become reconciled to the idea that they are not omniscient. They rest content for a while in the things that they are assured of, simply because those things bound their horizon. But when they become conscious that there are things that they do not know, and things that they with their finite minds cannot understand, they give up everything. They will know everything or nothing. Unfortunately, when they have thrown away those things that they know, and are the nearest to knowing nothing, they imagine that they are the nearest to knowing everything.

Henry Ward Beecher tells of a lesson which was once given him in regard to continuing in the things which he knew. When

he was a boy, he had a very original teacher in mathematics. One day Henry was demonstrating a problem, when his teacher suddenly interrupted him with an emphatic “No!” This disconcerted him and he began again at the beginning, but was very soon interrupted by another emphatic contradiction of his statement. Wholly discouraged, he sat down, and the problem was given to another boy, who demonstrated it in the same manner and was met by the same contradictions on the part of the teacher. This boy, however, paid no heed to the interruptions, and completed his demonstration and was commended.

“Why, [said young Beecher, in an injured tone,] that’s just the way I did it.”

“Yes, [replied the teacher,] but you didn’t stick to it.”

That is the way with many Christians. They go along very smoothly so long as there is no breath of opposition; but as soon as they meet with a sharp contradiction, they don’t know what to do. They act as though they thought that nothing can be true unless everybody believes it. It isn’t, however, because the things that they are assured of are attacked, that they give up the truth, but because something else is declared or insinuated to be the truth, and they cannot harmonize the two. Doubts and fanciful theories are presented to them, and they straightway leave the solid ground of truth, to chase the will-o’-the-wisp into the bogs of error. How much better off people would be if they would only heed the apostle’s injunction to continue in the things that they are assured of. Is not that the only common sense way of doing?

It is only those who patiently continue in well-doing⁵⁵ that God will reward with eternal life. Eternity in the kingdom of God will be continual progression in the truths which have been learned on earth. No man who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is worthy of the kingdom of Heaven; because if he cannot continue for a few years in things that he has been assured of, how can he continue in the same things throughout eternity?

⁵⁵ *Romans 2:7.*

Happy is the man who continues instant in prayer,

Ephesians 6

¹⁸ ...watching thereunto with all perseverance,

—and is thus...

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁸ ...steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Have you been assured of one thing? Then cling to it and continue in it, even though it be the only thing you know. Better be assured of one thing, than to be in doubt of every thing. Does somebody say,

“Well, I don’t know about that”?

Then do you reply,

“Well, I do know about it.”

Does somebody taunt you with your ignorance of many things? Tell them that your ignorance of many things shall not overthrow your knowledge of the one thing. Whatever is said and done,

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ ...continue in the things which you have learned, and have been assured of.

Only by so doing can you hope to know any thing more. Above all things, continue in the knowledge of God.

Titus 3

⁸ This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Oh that all who profess faith in Christ might so know Him whom they have believed that they would...

Ephesians 4

¹⁴ ...be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.



2. The Bible the Word of God

Signs of the Times, May 6, 1889

THE *Christian Union* of April 4 contains the following question and answer:

Q: Will you please tell me what authority there is for believing the Gospels to be anything more than the honest narratives of men who had lived with Christ; also the Epistles to be anything more than the counsels of wise and good men, not inspired—that is, not having the words put into their mouths by the Holy Ghost?

A: The Gospels themselves do not profess to be anything more. In the Epistles it is asserted that “we speak in words which the Spirit teaches.” *1 Corinthians* 2:13. “Words” here means “discourse” rather than the grammatical parts of speech—that is, the ideal rather than the material element of language. To be inspired is not identical with having the words put into the mouth by the Spirit.

That the Gospels and epistles are inspired is plain from the fact that they are inspiring. Their inspiration is seen in the moral and spiritual power which they exert upon the conscience, and attests the illumination of their own consciences by the Spirit of Truth. But that this illumination was such as to exclude all error in whatever they wrote, although it is a tenet of local and provincial belief, is no part of the faith of the church catholic.

We do not propose to give a dissertation on inspiration, but we do want to protest against the passing of such theories as the above under the name of “Christian.” To say that the Scriptures are to be considered as inspired if they are inspiring, but that the illumination of the writers was not such as to exclude all error in what they wrote, is simply to place them on a level with the writings of Shakespeare, Scott, Milton, and Macaulay. Some people are never moved by the reading of the Scriptures; then, according to the theory of the *Christian Union*, the Scriptures are not inspired to such ones.

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

So then the *Christian Union* would have us believe that the Scriptures are not inspired to worldlings. Its theory, by denying that they are indeed “the Scriptures of truth,”⁵⁶ makes it useless to preach to sinners, for there is nothing to reach them with.

If only the *Christian Union* were concerned in this matter, we should not say anything; but there are God-fearing men who rest all their hope on the truthfulness of the Bible, who have been caught by this theory, which virtually undermines their hope. We say that the theory that men are to judge of the inspiration of the Bible by the impression which is made upon them, is the foundation of heathenism. Thus, it makes man a judge of God. To be able to decide upon the kind and degree of inspiration in any given passage, is to be able to know the mind of the Spirit of God. And the man who measures the inspiration of the Bible by his own understanding of it, makes himself equal with God; indeed, he makes himself a god; for he virtually declares that his own mind is the rule for himself. When he pursues a certain course, he does so, not because the Bible says so, but because he wants to. He has no higher standard of right and wrong than himself. There are men who have held these loose views of inspiration who have yet been good Bible Christians, but only because they have not followed out their theories; but the effect of their teaching on others is often most disastrous.

To us it seems a terrible thing to sit in judgment upon God. The man who accepts as inspired only what commends itself to his judgment and understanding, either lifts himself up to the level of God, or else brings God down to his own level, which is the same thing. He says in effect that God cannot know any more than he does, and he really makes his own Bible. As we said before, men

⁵⁶ *Daniel* 10:21.

may hold such a theory as a theory which they have never, even in thought, followed to its end, and may remain earnest, God-fearing Christians; but what must be the effect of such a theory upon those whose Christian character is wholly unformed? We earnestly exhort every reader of the *Signs of the Times* to accept the following theory of the Bible as the only safe one, even if they do not comprehend to the full the mind of the Spirit of God:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ 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.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

⁶ Add not unto His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

Romans 3

⁴ Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.

3. Christ in the Old Testament

Signs of the Times, July 7, 1890

AT THE recent Convention of the New York State Sunday-School Association, Dr. John Hall delivered an address on “The Old Testament Enfolding the New,” in which he said that it is simply calumny to say that God is represented in any other light in the Old Testament from what He is described in the New; and he closed with this exhortation:

Put before your pupils the union, completeness, and beauty of the Old and the New, and you will be magnifying Christ. That is the only thing you need to do. If you magnify Christ, He will draw all men unto Him.

We are glad to see the attention of people directed to the entire Bible instead of to fragments of it. It is all profitable.⁵⁷



⁵⁷ 2 Timothy 3:16.

4. Reading the Bible

Signs of the Times, September 22, 1890

IT IS related of Thomas Carlyle that a gentleman at whose house he was stopping asked him to read for morning worship, when he began at the 1st chapter of *Job* and continued reading until he had completed the book, saying as he finished,

“That is a wonderful poem, and to be understood needs to be read through at one sitting.”

The host, as might naturally be expected, never again asked Carlyle to read the Scriptures at morning worship. But Carlyle had the correct idea of Scripture reading—the idea that should be applied not only to the book of *Job* but to many other books of the Bible, although we would by no means recommend such lengthy reading at family prayers. There, a few verses are often better than even an entire chapter.

But it is a great mistake, especially in reading the minor prophets and the epistles, to take them in fragments. One who, in his rigid adherence to the rule of just so many chapters a day, reads the 1st chapter of *The Epistle to the Galatians*, for instance, as the last of his chapters for one day, the second, third, and fourth the next day, and the fifth and sixth the third day, loses more of the force and beauty of the epistle than can be expressed.

We do not say that one should never read in one of the epistles without reading all, but we do say that everybody ought to make it a frequent practice to read an entire book at one sitting. Never mind if it does break into your course; better break that than lose the benefit of the connection. It won't hurt to read a little more. It is not a great thing to do. People will sit down and read in a newspaper more matter than is contained in any one of the epistles, and not think they have performed a great feat.

Read the Bible through by course as much as you please, but do not neglect reading by books, and studying by books, and you

will find that you are beginning to know the Bible as never before.



5. How Do You Read? (1890)

Signs of the Times, December 29, 1890

Original title: How Readest Thou?

THIS is as pertinent a question at the present time as it was when the Saviour uttered it. Indeed, there probably was never before a time when there was so much need as now of professed Christians looking to their ground, to see where they stand. It is well understood that there is a great deal of rampant infidelity in the land, but how many realize that that infidelity is only the central portion of the stream, which indicates a strong current in that direction? It is a sad fact that infidelity is creeping—no, not creeping, but stalking boldly, into the church. That this is true, a few extracts picked up at random will suffice to show.

It is doubtless well known that the great question which is agitating the Methodist Church at the present time is the admission of women as delegates to the General Conference, and their ordination as ministers, which would soon follow. With this controversy we have nothing to do, and do not care at present to express our opinion as to its merits. We simply wish to show how the Bible is regarded by many persons high in church authority and influence. The extracts given will show a general casting off of the authority of the Scriptures.

Prof. L. T. Townsend, of New York (Presbyterian), contributes a chapter to Miss Frances E. Willard's book, *Woman in the Pulpit*, and on page 153, after quoting *1 Timothy 2:11* and *1 Corinthians 14:34-35*, he says:

It must be perfectly apparent that if the prohibition in these passages is infallible,...then Miss Willard and her friends may as well first as last retire from the controversy.

But Professor Townsend does not think that these texts affect Miss Willard's case, therefore he does not regard them as infallible.

Take another passage from the same pen, and the disregard, not to say contempt, of the Scriptures will be still more apparent:

The pastoral epistles were addressed, not to Presbyterians in America, but to two young Jews. The writer of these epistles did not have in mind a thought of American Presbyterians. Why, therefore, do Presbyterians—we include not a few Methodists—speak and act as though they must heed the admonitions of these epistles, going so far as to enforce against women the supposed injunctions of these epistles? Why are they meddling in these affairs?⁵⁸

Right glad are we that many Presbyterians and Methodists can be accused of regarding the epistles of Paul as authoritative even in these days. It shows that the spirit of the Reformation has not entirely died out.

The following two statements are from Methodists, published without signature in the New York *Christian Advocate*. It should be stated that the *Advocate* strongly condemns such utterances:

Paul, who definitely believed when he wrote those scriptures that the world would not even see the second century, much less the nineteenth, was ordering the churches for his own age. So it must be remembered that Paul was a bachelor, and he was writing in the first century, in the midst of heathen surroundings, and endeavoring to be all things to all men, and not infringing upon local laws and customs more than he had to at a time when, as a rule, women had no rights that men were bound to respect.

Anyone can see that the same line of argument would rule out all the epistles, as well as the words of Christ, and then what have people to guide them? Simply their own perverse wills. But let us read another statement from the pen of Miss Willard, whose every utterance is taken as gospel by several hundred thousand professed Christian men and women. She says:

⁵⁸ *Woman in the Pulpit*, pp. 146-147.

Whoever quotes to the intelligent and devout women of the American church today, the specific instructions given by Paul to the illiterate and immoral women of Corinth, does so at the expense of sound judgment, not to say scholarship.⁵⁹

So it seems that the test of the value of any portion of Scripture is to be the intelligence of men and women, and their idea as to the necessity for it. If it suit them, it is all right; if it does not, they reject it. Of what value is the Bible to such people? Their own wills are their standard of right and wrong.

One more quotation must complete the view of the picture for the present. It is from a correspondent of the *Christian Union*, of July 24, and passes in that paper unchallenged. It is as follows:

I have been interested in reading a criticism of Lyman Abbott, by his brother Edward, and I am impelled to jot down a few thoughts as they have occurred to an outsider. I could not but be surprised that, of the nineteen texts quoted by Edward Abbott, to establish an important, and one generally regarded as an essential, doctrine of Christianity, *only one is from the sayings of its Founder*, and in that one, the language is unquestionably figurative. Will not a higher and truer criticism, before long, come to regard the writings of the apostles to be just what they are, namely, the expression of their *personal* opinions? May they not have been sometimes mistakes? What warrant have we for assuming that Paul, Peter, James, or John were able to draw any truer conclusions from the contents of the four gospels than Lyman Abbott, H. W. Beecher, Dr. Channing, and a thousand others—especially if we accept the claim of Edward Abbott, that the spirit of truth is *now*, as well as has been, in the church?

There you have the result to which all the others are tending if they have not already arrived. It is open infidelity of a large part of the Bible, and virtual rejection of the remainder, since it all stands on the same foundation. It is terrible to contemplate the gross deceptions into which the church will plunge when such ideas become prevalent; and they are rapidly spreading, for they

⁵⁹ *Woman in the Pulpit*, p. 50.

are entrenched in high places. The book from which the most of these quotations are made, is endorsed in the highest terms by Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, Dr. Talmage, and Joseph Cook. Is this not evidence that the church is on the “down grade”?

But we have not written this simply to expose the infidelity of these men and women. We have written in order that every reader may stop and answer carefully the question at the head of this article. Do you believe the Bible implicitly, or do doubts steal across your mind as you read? The foundation for all this infidelity exists in the mind of everyone who holds the words of Peter, Paul, James, John, Moses, David, Isaiah, or Solomon, recorded in the Scriptures, as of any less authority or truth than those uttered by Jesus in the sermon on the mount. Note the surprise of the writer last quoted, that out of nineteen texts in support of a Christian doctrine, “*only one is from the sayings of its Founder.*” Is a scripture any less the word of God if written by one of the apostles or prophets than if spoken with an audible voice by the Lord himself? Are you, dear reader, in the habit of attributing “degrees” to inspiration, and of considering one passage as more valuable than another, according as it meets *your* approbation? If so, you are in great danger. You say you believe that it is *all true*, although of varying authority and importance. Very well, we accept your statement that you believe the Scriptures, and ask you to accept the following as true:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And please remember that in this Bible, all of which you profess to believe, the apostle Paul’s epistles are classed with “the other scriptures.”⁶⁰ They were given by inspiration too.

⁶⁰ 2 Peter 3:16.

We ask you to believe the statement contained in this verse:

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

Here is another:

1 Corinthians 14

³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

That is, the man who does not acknowledge Paul's writings as the commandments of the Lord, is unspiritual. He cannot discern spiritual things. How many are putting their own unspiritual doubts in the place of the holy word of God.

No one can receive from the Scriptures that living power which they are designed to give, unless when he reads them he drops from his mind all thought of the men who penned them, and of their human frailties, and hears only the voice of God. Thus did the apostles regard the Old Testament. For instance, Paul quoted *Isaiah* 6:9-10 to the unbelieving Jews at Rome, introducing the text thus:

Acts 28

²⁵ Well spoke the Holy Ghost by *Isaiah* the prophet unto our fathers, saying, etc.

Again, in *Hebrews* 10:15-17 we have a quotation from *Jeremiah* 31:33, in which *Jeremiah* is not mentioned, but the words are credited to the Holy Spirit. And again, in *Hebrews* 1:8-9 we have *Psalms* 45:6-7 quoted, and *David* is not mentioned, but the words are quoted as addressed by God the Father directly to the Son, without any human agency. They are indeed just as much the word of God as those which were spoken on Mount Sinai, or the

Mount of Olives, and the New Testament is not a whit behind the Old.

Let us, then, avoid the beginnings of infidelity. Let us leave no room for doubt to creep into our minds, and this we can do by accepting the whole Bible, not as the word of man, but as the word of God. Then, remembering that...

Proverbs 30

⁵ ...every word of God is pure,

—let us receive it with humble reverence, and hide it within our hearts.



6. Effects of Erroneous Opinions

Signs of the Times, April 20, 1891

IT IS very common for those who are quite loose in their belief, or who do not believe much of anything, to ease their consciences by saying,

“God will never condemn a man on account of his opinions; it is how a man lives that determines his condition at last.”

How these people acquired such intimate knowledge of God’s plans, so as to be able to speak so definitely of what He will or will not do, is not apparent, for it is very evident from the Bible that a man’s opinions have a good deal to do in deciding his final destiny.

It seems never to occur to those who use the expression quoted above, that they are strangely inconsistent with themselves. The very ones who use such language will speak very slightly of one who “has not the courage of his convictions,” that is, one who holds opinions which he dare not act out. Such a man they justly accuse of leading a double life; and yet they seem to think that God will be perfectly satisfied with a man who leads such a life.

But the great mistake is in supposing that a man can hold opinions which will not to a greater or less extent influence his actions. The statement by Watts, the “the mind’s the standard of the man,” is but another way of expressing the truth uttered by Solomon that as a man...

Proverbs 23

⁷ ...thinks in his heart, so is he.

A man cannot entertain vile thoughts and still have all his actions pure. Neither can a man entertain erroneous opinions without acting in accordance with them, unless his circumstances hinder him; and in that case he is entitled to no more credit than the thief in prison is to be commended for not stealing.

In times past people have suffered severely on account of their opinions. When Paul says,

Hebrews 11

³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace,

—he says in effect that the inhabitants of Jericho perished because they believed not. If they had believed, they might have been saved as well as the harlot Rahab. But they were of the opinion that their gods were stronger than the God of Israel. Somebody might have said to them,

“It doesn’t make any difference what ideas you have about God; it is your actions that will determine your final lot.”

But their ideas of God had everything to do in shaping their actions, and their erroneous ideas led them into practices which caused their ruin.

Again we read of the children of Israel:

Hebrews 3

¹⁶ For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

¹⁷ But with whom was He [Christ] grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Here we have the plain declaration that it was the unbelief of the Israelites that shut them out of the promised land. “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” But would they not have been allowed to enter in if they had not sinned? Certainly; and they would not have sinned but for their unbelief. Their sin was a necessary consequence of their unbelief.

How was it with the inhabitants of Sodom? When Lot, who believed the warnings of the angels, went out to tell his relatives that God was going to destroy the city,

Genesis 19

¹⁴ ...he seemed as one that mocked.

They regarded him as a fanatic; very likely they thought he was losing his mind, and would have to be cared for. But the Lord did destroy the city, and all those who disbelieved perished with it. It was their opinion that they were safe enough, and in consequence of their erroneous opinion they perished.

We may learn a lesson from them. Indeed, their case is recorded for our admonition. Christ says:

Luke 17

²⁸ As it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

³⁰ Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

All over the land the coming of the Lord is being proclaimed. The sure word of prophecy foretells that His coming is now very near. Yet these things are to thousands as idle tales. Those who preach the nearness of the second advent are regarded as fanatical. It is the common opinion that the world is just in its infancy. Men say,

“Well, it doesn’t make any difference how we believe in regard to the coming of the Lord, if we only live right.”

But still the truth exists that only...

Hebrews 9

²⁸ ...unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Why will this be so? Simply because those who do not believe that His coming is near at hand, will not be getting ready for it.

Let no one delude himself with the idea that he has “a right to his own opinions,” and that he can believe what he pleases and still be safe at last. It is true that so far as other men are concerned he has a right to his own opinions; that is, he is not answerable to any man for what he believes; but all men are answerable to God for their opinions. No man has a right to hold an opinion contrary to what God has revealed in his word. And those who will cling to their self-assumed right to believe what they please, will find at the last that it was a dearly-bought privilege. Among those who...

Revelation 21

⁸ ...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,

—the *unbelieving* occupy a prominent place.

Hebrews 3

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

7. The Reasonableness of Faith

Present Truth, May 7, 1891

THE Christian's faith is something that cannot be seen as a source of wonder to the unbeliever, and is often the object of ridicule and contempt. The worldling regards the simple faith of the Christian as an evidence of weakness of mind, and with a complacent smile at the thought of the superiority of his own intellect, he declares that *he* never believes a thing without evidence; *he* never jumps at conclusions, and doesn't believe anything that he cannot see and understand.

The saying that the man who believes nothing that he cannot understand will have a very short creed, is as true as it is trite. There is not a philosopher living who can understand the one-hundredth part of the simple phenomena that he sees every day. Scientists have found out by observation that certain kinds of soil are specially adapted to certain kinds of produce; but nobody can tell why.

As a matter of fact, faith is one of the commonest things. There is no skeptic who does not have faith to a greater or less degree; and in very many cases they go even farther, and manifest simple credulity. But the element of faith underlies all business transactions, and all the affairs of life. Two men make an appointment to meet at a certain time and place, to transact certain business; each has to trust the other's word. The merchant has to exercise faith in his employees and his customers. Yea, more, he has to, unconsciously it may be, exercise faith in God; for he will send his ships across the ocean, with confidence that they will return again loaded with merchandise, and yet he must know that their safe return depends on the winds and the waves, which are beyond human control. And even though he never once thinks of the power that controls the elements, he puts confidence in the officers and crew. He will even trust himself on board of one of the ships, whose captain and crew he never saw, and confidently expect that they will bring him to the desired heaven.

One of these men who thinks that it is foolish to trust in a God “whom no man has seen, neither can see,”⁶¹ will go to a little window and lay down a twenty-dollar gold-piece, and in return will receive from a man whom he never saw before, and whose name he does not know, only a little strip of paper which says that he is entitled to a ride to a distant city. He perhaps has never seen that city, and knows of its existence only by the reports of others, yet he steps aboard the cars, gives his bit of paper to another total stranger, and settles down in comfort. He has never seen the engineer, and does not know but that he may be incapable or malicious; yet he is perfectly unconcerned, and confidently expects to be carried safely to the place, the existence of which he knows only by hearsay. More than this, he holds in his hand a piece of paper prepared by some men whom he never saw, which states that these strangers, to whose care he has entrusted himself, will land him at his destination at a certain hour; and so implicitly does this skeptic believe this statement, that he sends word ahead to some other person whom he has never seen, making arrangements to meet him at that specified time.

Still further, his faith is drawn upon in the sending of the message announcing his coming. He steps into a little room, writes a few words on a slip of paper, which he hands to a stranger sitting by a little machine, pays the man half a dollar, and then goes his way believing that in less than half an hour his unknown friend a thousand miles away will be reading the message which he left in the station behind him.

But to all this the skeptic will reply that he does not blindly trust in others, but that he has *reason* to believe that he will be carried safely, that his message will be sent correctly, and that his letter will reach his wife in good season. His faith in these things is based on the following grounds:

1. Others have been carried in safety, and thousands of letters and telegrams have been correctly sent and promptly delivered.

⁶¹ 1 Timothy 6:16.

Whenever a letter has been miscarried, it has almost invariably been the fault of the sender.

2. The men to whom he entrusts himself and his messages, make a business of carrying people and messages; if they should fail to fulfill their agreements, nobody would place any confidence in them, and their business would soon be ruined.

3. He has had the assurance of the Government by whom the railways and telegraphs are controlled, and which thereby becomes responsible. His confidence in the letter-box was due to the fact that he saw upon it the letters "V. R.," and he knows that they mean that the Government has promised safely to deliver any letter placed in the box, if it is properly addressed and stamped. He believes that the Government will fulfill its promises, because if it does not, its existence must soon come to an end. Its existence depends on its power to fulfill its promises, and its integrity in performing them. And all these things form a solid ground for his faith.

Well, the Christian has a thousand-fold more ground for his faith in the promises of God. Faith is not blind credulity. Says the apostle,

Hebrews 11

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [ground, or confidence] of things not seen.

This is an inspired definition, and therefore we may conclude that the Lord does not expect us to exercise faith except on evidence. Now it can readily be shown that the Christian has the same ground for exercising faith in God, that the skeptic has for his confidence in the railroad and telegraph companies, or in the Government; and a great deal more.

1. Others have trusted the promises of God, and have found them to be sure. The 11th chapter of *Hebrews* contains a long list of those who have verified the promises of God; who...

Hebrews 11

³³ ...through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens.

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again.

2. The God whom we trust makes a business of answering prayers, and of protecting and caring for His subjects.

Lamentations 3

²² It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not;

—and...

Micah 7

¹⁸ He delights in mercy.

Jeremiah 29

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

3. The existence of God's government depends on the fulfillment of His promises. The Christian has the assurance of the Government of the universe, that every lawful request that he makes will be granted. Government is especially for the protection of the weak. Suppose now that God should fail to fulfill one of His promises to the very weakest and most insignificant persons in the world; that single failure would destroy the entire government of God.

Moreover, those who put their trust in human government, or in any institution of men, are liable to be disappointed. With the best of intentions, mistakes will be made, because men are but fallible. But to the Christian the firm assurance is given:

Deuteronomy 33

²⁶ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the heaven in your help, and in His excellency on the sky.

²⁷ The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

His power is shown in creation. The things that He has made attest His eternal power and Godhead. The more powerful the Government, the greater the confidence in it. Then what more reasonable than that we should have implicit confidence in the God whom nature and revelation combined declare to be omnipotent, eternal, and unchangeable?

If I should express to an infidel my doubts as to the integrity of one of his friends, he would say:

“That’s because you don’t know him; just try him, and you will find him as true as steel.”

This would be a fair reply; and so we say to the infidel who doubts the promises of God:

Psalms 34

⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good;...

⁹ There is no want to them that fear Him.

What right has anybody to doubt the promises or the power of God before he has given them a fair trial? And in that case, what right has anybody to doubt God, since everybody is testing His power and goodness every moment of his life?

8. How the Word Came

Present Truth, March 10, 1892

KEEPING in mind the text,

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,

—we will place by the side of it the following from *2 Peter*:

2 Peter 1

²¹ For the 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.

In a later article we shall consider more fully the scope of the word “prophecy;”⁶² but here it is sufficient to note that the statement made in regard to the prophecy, must be applicable to all Scripture, since it is all given by the inspiration, or breathing, of God. The Scriptures, therefore, did not originate from men, but from the Holy Spirit. This must settle the question as to whether or not the Scriptures are in any degree the reflection of the ignorance or the prejudice of the men who wrote them; for he who would claim that they are, must take the position that the Holy Spirit is capable of being moved by human prejudice, or that it cannot utter words of perfect, Divine truth through an imperfect instrument. But that would be to degrade the Holy Spirit to the level of man.

It is not our business to inquire how the Spirit of God could speak through a human instrument without destroying his individuality, and still the message be wholly Divine. That is a mystery that rests only in the power of God. We accept it just as we accept the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, without attempting to explain it.

When we have our attention specially directed to the fact that the Scriptures proceed wholly from the Spirit of God, we cannot

⁶² See the next article, “The Inspired Word.”

fail to be struck with the frequency with which the statement occurs in the Bible. Let us note a few instances.

2 Samuel 23

¹ Now these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

² The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.

David spoke the word, but it was the Word of God. Again,

1 Peter 1

¹⁰ Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

¹¹ 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.

Who was it that testified? It was not the prophets themselves, but the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets. The prophets did not understand the full import of the things that the Spirit testified through them, but had to study their own writings.

Notice in the following Scriptures how carefully the distinction is made between the men who were used as instruments, and the source whence the revelation came:

Acts 28

²⁵ Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers,

²⁶ Saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive.

Acts 1

¹⁶ Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Acts 4

²⁴ Lord, You are God, which have made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

²⁵ Who by the mouth of your servant David have said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

Luke 1

⁶⁸ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He has visited and redeemed His people,

⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.

Acts 3

²⁰ And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

In all the preceding texts the prophet is mentioned as the mouthpiece of the Spirit of God; but in the following quotation from *Jeremiah* 21:33, the prophet is ignored, and the credit is given directly to the Holy Spirit:

Hebrews 10

¹⁵ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that He had said before,

¹⁶ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.

Who gave this witness? The Holy Ghost. The prophet Jeremiah was used as the instrument of transmitting it to the people; but it came so directly from the Holy Spirit that Jeremiah could without injustice be ignored in giving credit for the words.

And so we learn that, since the Scriptures came not by the will of man, but that...

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²¹ ...men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost,

–the word which they spoke is not the word of man, but is indeed the Word of God.



9. The Inspired Word

Present Truth, August 25, 1892

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ But continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them;

¹⁵ And that 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.

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

SO MUCH effort has been made by unbelieving men, even in the ministry, to make the *Revised Version* appear to teach that some scripture is not inspired, that it is necessary first of all to show that a literal rendering of the Bible does not diminish its claims to inspiration. In the *Revision* we read,

¹⁶ Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable...

This is even stronger than the other, for instead of making a positive statement that all Scripture is inspired, it mentions it as a fact so well known that it needs no proof, and proceeds to a statement of the result. Without going into grammatical technicalities, it is only necessary to say that the present participle “inspired,” limiting the term “all Scripture,” conveys the simple idea that since all Scripture is inspired it is also profitable. Add to this the fact that the revisers placed in the margin the exact reading of the old version, it is evident that we are fully warranted in quoting 2 *Timothy* 3:16 as a positive declaration that all Scripture is inspired of God.

The word “Scriptures” is a term used to denote the sacred writings commonly known as the Old and the New Testament. It corresponds to the word “Bible.” “Bible” means “book;” when we say, “the Bible,” we really say, “the Book.” Now the number of books in

the world is almost beyond computation; yet the Bible is so prominent, and so much above all other books, that it cannot be classed among them, but as distinguished as “the Book,” or the Bible. Everybody knows what book we mean when we so speak. It is the same way with the parallel term, “the Scriptures.”

We read of Christ, when He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus, after His resurrection, that...

Luke 24

²⁷ ...beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Thus we see that the term “the Scriptures” includes the whole of the Old Testament. Therefore *2 Timothy* 3:16 affirms that they are inspired. Indeed, when Timothy was a child there was nothing but the Old Testament written. It is especially to the Old Testament that the apostle Paul refers when he says that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” and that it is able to make a man wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works.

But the fact that the Old Testament is particularly referred to in *2 Timothy* 3:16 does not exclude the New Testament writings from the term “the Scriptures.” The apostle Peter refers to the writings of Paul, and says that they contain...

2 Peter 3

¹⁶ ...some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

The popular idea is that the Old Testament is scarcely inspired, and it is thought a great concession to give it a place with the New; but this is directly opposite to the Scriptural idea. There we find that the writings of the New Testament are declared to be worthy of a place by the side of those of the Old. Both are from the same source; both were given by inspiration of God, and are

of equal authority. He who regards the Bible as it should be, will make no difference between the Old Testament and the New.

Now that we have before us a plain statement of what is included in the declaration that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, we may consider the fact of inspiration itself. Not that we can understand it, or set forth any theory of inspiration, but that we may form some conception of its greatness. We consider the works of God in creation, not that we may understand the mystery of creation, but that we may glorify God, whose greatness it proclaims. So we consider the inspiration of the Bible, in order that we may rightly appreciate the infinite power of the Word of God.

"Inspiration" means literally, "breathing." A full inspiration is a full breath. This is so common an expression that the reader does not have to know Latin or Greek in order to appreciate the statement that the term, "inspired of God," in *2 Timothy* 3:16 means simply "God-breathed." The fact is, then, that all of the Scripture is the direct breathing of the Almighty. We are not required to explain how this can be, since it was all written or spoken by men, inasmuch as it does not rest with us to explain or understand how the omnipotent God works. No man can by searching find out God, and know the Almighty to perfection.⁶³ We may, however, at some later time, note a few parallel cases, showing the fact that God does work directly through the agency of men, and even through the unwilling agency of evil men. What we are now concerned with is to show that the Scriptures declare themselves to be emphatically God's own word.

Let us read *2 Peter* 1:20:

2 Peter 1

²⁰ For the 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.

The *Revision* has it:

⁶³ *Job* 11:7.

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²⁰ For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

With this let us read a still stronger statement in *1 Peter* 1:11. In order to get the full force of the verse, we will read the tenth verse also:

1 Peter 1

¹⁰ Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

¹¹ 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.

Take the two statements from Peter, and put them together, and we find that the Spirit of Christ—the Holy Spirit—was in the men who wrote the Bible, and that it used their voices or hands to express its own words and thoughts. How this could be, and the men still retain their individuality, and write and speak from the fullness of their own hearts, we shall not attempt to explain. Illustrations will, however, be given later.

Additional proof of the statement that the Holy Spirit itself is the real author of the Scriptures, the men being only its agents, is found in the following texts:

Acts 1

¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said (the number of names together were about a hundred and twenty),

¹⁶ Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas.

Acts 3

¹⁸ But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He has so fulfilled.

Acts 4

²⁴ And when they [the disciples] heard that [namely, the report of Peter and John] they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, You are God, which have made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

²⁵ Who by the mouth of your servant David have said, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

Speaking of the interview that Paul had with the Jews in Rome, the evangelist says:

Acts 28

²⁵ And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

²⁶ Saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing, you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, you shall see, and shall not perceive.

Again, Peter said to the people who gathered to look upon the lame man that was healed:

Acts 3

²⁰ And He [God] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

See a similar statement in *Luke* 1:70. Also *2 Samuel* 23:1-2.

But there are still plainer evidences that the Scriptures are God's word alone, and not man's. In the book of *Jeremiah* (chapter 31:33) we read:

Jeremiah 31

³³ But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write them in their hearts.

In the book of *Hebrews* this same language is quoted, thus:

Hebrews 10

¹⁵ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that He had said before,

¹⁶ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.

Although these words occur in the prophecy of Jeremiah, they are not his words. The Spirit of Christ was in that holy man testifying, so that when the writer to the Hebrews quoted the words, he credited them directly to the Holy Ghost, omitting all reference to Jeremiah. In this no injustice was done Jeremiah; he himself would have acknowledged that the words were the Lord's, and not his own.

In like manner we find in the 1st chapter of *Hebrews* several verses quoted from the *Psalms*, yet the writer of the *Psalms* is not once mentioned, but God is declared to be the speaker. See verses 7-12.

But this is all that the limits of this article allow. Let the texts herein quoted be pondered carefully, and in the next paper⁶⁴ we shall, God willing, read some other Scriptures showing further that the Scriptures are wholly inspired by God, and that by whatever agency they come to us, they proceed from the Holy Spirit, and are as much the Word of God as though uttered by Him with an audible voice.

⁶⁴ PP Editor's note: The "next paper" would have been *Present Truth*, September 1, 1892. But September 1, 8, and 15, are missing from the *Pioneer Writings* collection, and from the *Adventist Archives* website.

10. The Life of the Word

Present Truth, September 22, 1892

THE life of the word is the life of God, for it is God breathed, and the breath of God is life. Its life and power are thus attested:

Hebrews 4 [RV]

¹² For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Saviour, also said of the words of God,

John 6

⁶³ The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.

Let us see what gives the word its life.

The 30th chapter of *Deuteronomy* follows the account of the curses for disobedience to the law, and the blessings for obedience. In it the people are again admonished to keep the law, and are told what the Lord will do for them, even after they have been disobedient if they will repent. Then Moses continues:

Deuteronomy 30

¹¹ For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off.

¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹⁴ But the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

Now compare carefully with this passage the words of the apostle Paul in:

Romans 10

⁶ But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

⁷ Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

⁸ But what says it? The word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

⁹ That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The careful reader will readily see that this latter passage is a quotation of the former, with additions in parentheses. These additions are comments made by the Holy Spirit. They tell us just what Moses meant by the word “commandment.” Or, rather, since the Holy Spirit itself dictated the language in each case, in the latter passage it has made more clear what it meant in the first instance. Notice that bringing the commandment down from heaven is shown to be the same as bringing Christ down from above, and that to bring the commandment from the deep is the same as to bring Christ up from the dead.

What is shown by this? Nothing more nor less than that the commandment, the law, or the entire word of the Lord, is identical with Christ. Do not misunderstand. It is not meant that Christ is nothing more than the letters and words and sentences that we read in the Bible. Far from it. The fact is that whoever reads the Bible, and finds nothing but mere words, such as he may find in any other book, does not find the real word at all. What is meant is that the real word is not a dead letter, but is identical with Christ. Whoever finds the word indeed, finds Christ, and he who does not find Christ in the word, has not found the word of God.

The apostle Paul says that...

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

But he says also that Christ dwells in the heart by faith.⁶⁵ So faith in the living word of God brings Christ into the heart. He is the life of the word.

This is also shown in the same chapter in which we find the statement made by Christ that the words which He spoke were Spirit and life. In the thirty-fifth verse of that chapter, we read,

John 6

³⁵ Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.

Again, in the fifty-first verse,

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

And again,

⁵⁴ Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Then in the sixty-third verse he added,

⁶³ It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.

Here we find the plainest declaration that the word of God, received in faith, conveys Christ actually to the soul of man.

In the statement, “the flesh profits nothing,” we have the Romish “sacrifice of the mass” effectually undermined! Suppose that it were actually possible for the priest to perform the feat of turning the bread of the sacrament into the body of Christ; that would not amount to anything. If Christ himself had divided the actual flesh of His body, while on this earth, into portions large or small, and had given a piece to every man in the world, and each

⁶⁵ *Ephesians* 3:17.

man had eaten his piece, that would not have affected the character of a single man in the world. Christ himself said that...

John 6

⁶³ ...the flesh profits nothing.

The only way that any man in the world can eat the flesh of Christ is to believe His word with all His heart. In that way he will receive Christ indeed, and thus it is that...

Romans 10

¹⁰ ...with the heart man believes unto righteousness,

—for Christ is righteousness. And in this, the only way, any man in the world may eat the flesh of Christ, without the services of a priest or bishop.

This is a meager presentation of the theme, but who can do justice to it? No one can do more than take the simple statements of the Scriptures and meditate on them until the force of the fact begins to dawn on his mind. The fact that Christ is in the real word, that the life of the word is the life of Christ, is a most stupendous one. It is the mystery of the Gospel. When we receive it as a fact, and appropriate it, then we shall know for ourselves the meaning of the words that man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

11. Life from the Word

Present Truth, October 6, 1892

Deuteronomy 8

² And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments, or no.

³ And He humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.

THIS reference shows that there was a special purpose in giving the manna to the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was, of course, for the purpose of supplying their physical necessities, but that was not all. God could have supplied them with food in some other way. He could have led them through a land where they would have found sustenance; but he purposely led them through the wilderness, in places where they could find neither food nor water, in order that it might appear in the clearest manner that their food came directly from heaven. It was for the purpose of making them realize continually that God was their sole support.

Jesus referred to this after He had performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes. The Jews blindly asked for a sign as proof of His ministry, and thought to set Moses up against Christ, as superior to Him, by saying,

John 6

³¹ Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

But Jesus answered them,

John 6

³² Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread out of heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.

Christ, and not Moses, was the real leader of the children of Israel in the wilderness. He was bringing them out of the bondage of Egypt, not physical merely, but spiritual. He was leading them not to a merely temporal inheritance, but to an eternal inheritance of righteousness. The keeping of the commandments of God was the sole condition of their everlasting inheritance. But they had no power to do that. Nevertheless, they were not to despair, and say,

Deuteronomy 30

¹² Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it [that is, the commandment] unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Neither were they to say,

¹³ Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it [the commandments] unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

And why? The answer was thus given:

¹⁴ But the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

In our comparison of this text with the 10th chapter of *Romans*, in the last article, we found that the commandment here refers to none other than Christ. That is, they could find the commandment only by finding Christ, and He was near at hand. Outside of Christ there is no righteousness, no keeping of the commandments.

Some may think that this fact was not known in the time of Moses, but a careful reading of the 30th chapter of *Deuteronomy* shows that it was exactly what Moses was teaching the people. In verse 15 and 16 we read:

Deuteronomy 30

¹⁵ See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil;

¹⁶ In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply.

This shows that life is found only in the keeping of the commandments of God. Then in verses 19 and 20 we read:

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life; that you and your seed may live:

²⁰ That you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cleave unto Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days.

In this the people were plainly given to understand that their finding and keeping the commandments consisted solely in their finding and keeping Christ. With the heart man believes unto righteousness, because Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The life of the word is the life of Christ. We cannot understand how Christ's life is conveyed by the word when it is received in faith. It is the mystery of the incarnation. It is the mystery of God manifest in the flesh.

But God does not leave His people to try to grasp abstract truth. He cannot explain it to our comprehension, but He illustrates it so that we may be sure of the fact. So for forty years He gave to the Jews a daily object lesson of the truth that He is their life. As they ate the manna which He gave them directly from heaven, so they were to eat of Him. There was no human agency employed in supplying them with the manna for their physical necessities. So they were to recognize the fact that no human power could give the righteousness which the law demands. That same lesson serves for us, for it was written for our learning.

We cannot understand how it is that the bread that we eat gives us life and strength. We know the fact, and that is sufficient.

Physiologists trace for us the changes that the food undergoes in the process of digestion, but not one of them can tell how it is that bread is changed into bone and muscle. That is the mystery of life, which is within the power and comprehension of God alone. So, although we may not know how it is that God's word can give us life, we may know the fact.

In the raising of Lazarus and the ruler's daughter Christ gave to us instances of the life-giving power of his word. His word, "Lazarus, come forth,"⁶⁶ brought Lazarus from the grave in the full vigor of health. So at the last day His word will bring all the dead from their graves. The raising of the dead is accomplished by the same life-giving power that God bestows upon men in this world to save them from sin. Sin is death:

Romans 8

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death.

Ephesians 2

¹ And you has He quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins.

To disbelieve that God does actually give us His life in Christ, as we accept His word in faith, is equivalent to disbelieving that Christ ever raised the dead, or that He ever will. But whosoever believes that there was power in the word of Christ to raise Lazarus from the dead, because the word had the very life of Christ himself in it, may have the same life in himself, by which to keep the commandments of God.

⁶⁶ *John* 11:43.

12. Preaching the Word

Present Truth, October 6, 1892

Acts 7

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

WE HAVE none of the details of this sermon; we know only its results, and that is the best test of any sermon, Philip preached Jesus, and his entire audience found Jesus. For this sermon was preached to a single man.

But it is a mistake to call this preaching of Philip's "a sermon." The dictionaries tell us that a sermon is:

"a discourse delivered in public, usually by a clergyman, for the purpose of religious instruction, and grounded on some text or passage of scripture."

We may be sure that Philip did not stand up in the chariot and "deliver" an address. A sense of the fitness of things is sufficient to teach us that he did not practice any of the arts of the orator. He simply sat in the chariot with the eunuch, and talked with him as they rode along.

More than this, it is very certain that Philip's preaching was not "grounded on some text or passage of Scripture." In his day men preached the word itself. *Grounding* a sermon on a text of Scripture was left for the men who came after, and who corrupted the church by the wisdom of men. The apostle Paul tells how men did who preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. He says:

1 Corinthians 2

⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

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 pursuance of this practice, when the apostle went to Thessalonica, he...

Acts 17

² ...reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.

This verse says that it was "as his manner was." Christ's manner of preaching is shown by the exclamation of the two disciples with whom he talked on the way to Emmaus:

Luke 24

³² Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?

It was not sermonizing; it was preaching the word. Notice also that in this same chapter which tells of the preaching of Philip to the eunuch, it is stated of the church...

Acts 8

¹ ...which was at Jerusalem; [that] they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles,

⁴ ...[and that] they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

There are different words rendered "preach," but this is the same that is used elsewhere in this chapter, and which Christ used when He said that He knew He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. Greek scholars tell us that this word means to "chat" or to talk. So Jesus talked with the woman by the well, and with the two disciples by the way, opening to them the Scriptures. So Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and so Philip preached to the eunuch. So the disciples in Jerusalem, none of whom were preachers in the ordi-

nary sense of the word, when they were scattered abroad, went everywhere talking the word to all they met.

It transpires, therefore, that real preaching, in the Scripture sense of the word, and that is the only sense in which we have any right to use it, is nothing more or less than what is commonly known as Bible reading. And that is no small thing. To be able to do the work of the Bible reader requires knowledge of the Bible equal to that which is required of one who preaches before a multitude. There is no real difference in the work of the two. Why should it be thought that less knowledge of the word is required in preaching the word to one person, than in preaching it to one hundred? The most wonderful and gracious discourse of Jesus, which is recorded, was preached to one man at night. He who preaches to a hundred people has only one hundred *ones* to whom to preach.

The test of any preacher's ability to preach the gospel is his ability to preach Jesus to one person. And this is simply his ability to tell that person what he himself knows of the Lord Jesus and His word, so that other one may also know it for himself. It is true that God has not called every one who can thus preach to one person to preach to the multitudes; but the knowledge of God and His word that enables a person to preach to the one would enable him to preach to the hundred, if he were called upon to do so.

If these few lines shall serve to awaken in anyone a sense of the real work of the preacher, as distinguished from the sermonizer, and to show to any who are thinking of devoting themselves to the work of what is called Bible reading, as distinguished from public presentation of the word, that it is no inferior work, and that it does not consist in "going over" certain set formulas of Scripture, the object of the article will be gained.

13. A Growing Danger

Present Truth, October 6, 1892

IN THE two papers that have lately come to hand we find statements from two ministers, which show a most alarming condition of things, and the more alarming because the evil is on the increase. In one of them we find this statement:

The Bible is the star which the Magi followed till it stood over the young child. That is its mission, and when it has attained that end for a soul its work is for the most part finished.

A few years ago such language would not have been used by the editor of a Presbyterian journal. But the other statement, made by a minister in defense of the Higher Criticism, is even worse. He says:

In the late centuries Christ has hard work to hold His place of glory and honor because of Bibliolatry.

This the writer likens to Mariolatry of the preceding centuries. He adds,

Instead of saying that *Genesis* and *Proverbs* and *Malachi* have equal authority with the words of our Lord, the New Criticism says they are true or untrue only as they bear witness to Christ.

Any text of Scripture has authority only as it testifies of Jesus, *i.e.*, only as it breathes the spirit of the Lord.

The error in the statements consists in separating Christ from the word. The Scriptures lead the soul to Christ, not as the guide board points the way to the city, but which has to be left in order to reach the city, but revealing Christ in themselves. He who has the Bible in his hand, and does not see Christ in it, does not come to Christ, no matter what his profession may be. Christ is the Word of God, because in Him God's will concerning man is revealed; and that will is made known in the Bible, because the

Spirit of Christ was in the men who wrote it, and those holy men...

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²¹ ...spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

But the worst of all is the fact that the New Criticism, according to its defender, presumes to sit in judgment on the Bible, and therefore on the Lord himself. Men are to reject whatever in the Bible is not in harmony with the spirit of Christ! But how do they know what is in harmony with Him? By what do they decide? Why, simply by their own ideas, of course. They take counsel of their own judgment and feelings, and decide what Christ should be, and then reject all of the Bible that is not in harmony with their ideas. Like Origen of old, they endeavor to find a meaning “worthy of God.”

Now what are men who take this course really doing? They are really putting themselves in the place of Christ. As they interpret the Bible by their ideas of what Christ is, they virtually say that Christ is just as they are. And that is equal to saying that they are equal to Christ. Of course the men who do this would be shocked at this way of putting the case, but it is nevertheless true. Many well-intentioned people are being carried away by the speciousness of the New Criticism, and by the idea that there are degrees of inspiration in the Bible, and that it is left with them to decide what part of it is inspired and what is not; and it is needful to put before them in the clearest and strongest terms just what they are doing.

The characteristic of the Papacy—the man of sin—is that he...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁴ ...opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.

But what is the difference between this and the New Criticism, which makes itself the judge of Christ and of His word? There is no difference. It is the man of sin in every instance.

People may raise an alarm over the encroachments of Rome, but the danger is not in the political workings of Romanism, nor yet in the fact that clergymen are adopting popish ceremonies in the place of others a little less directly connected with Rome. The danger lies in the attitude of professed Protestants for the Bible. They themselves are preparing the way for Rome to gain the ecclesiastical supremacy of the world. When professed Protestants sit in judgment on the Bible, they have every essential characteristic of the Papacy. Every individual soul who thus sits in judgment on the Bible is, so far as his power extends, a pope. He differs in no essential particular from the Pope that sits in the Vatican, except in degree.

The “man of sin” spoken of in the Bible, is made up of many men of sin. The spirit of Antichrist must be in individual hearts before it can manifest itself at large. It is the exaltation of self, and this is shown in the most marked manner in the acceptance or rejection of the Bible, according as it pleases or displeases the fancy of men. Let all those who see danger in the sure encroachments of Rome direct all their energies toward preaching the word in its simplicity and power as the living word of the living God, and they will find that they have erected a most effectual barrier to Rome in the hearts of all who receive such teaching.

14. Unwise Caution

Present Truth, October 20, 1892

THERE is such a thing as being too cautious. This is the case when men hesitate to act upon the word of the Lord. How often it happens that people will acknowledge the clearness of the Word of God, and still will hesitate to let themselves rest upon it.

“I know that the Bible says so, but I believe in being cautious. I do not believe in moving too hastily.”

Such caution is sin. It is simply unbelief. How differently Mary did when the angel announced to her the birth of a son.

Luke 1

³⁸ Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your Word.

And the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Elizabeth, pronounced a blessing upon her for her ready belief.⁶⁷ Note also the ready belief of the shepherds when the birth of Jesus was announced to them. As soon as the angels departed, they said one to another:

Luke 2

¹⁵ Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.

The people who are too wise to take things hastily would have said,

“Let us go to Bethlehem and see if this thing is so.”

But those shepherds were just simple enough to believe the word of the Lord without any questioning. That is the kind of faith with which the Lord is pleased.

⁶⁷ See *Luke* 1:45.

15. The Testimony of the Bible to Itself

Signs of the Times, October 24, 1892

SOME persons object that what the Scriptures say as regards their Inspiration is not proper evidence—that we ought rather to have outside testimony concerning the Scriptures. It is true that, ordinarily, in the case of a man, his own testimony concerning himself is not conclusive; but it is not so in the case of the Bible. We must either take its testimony concerning its own inspiration, or else reject it entirely. He who doubts its testimony on this point will doubt it upon every point. Accepting the Bible as a book of truth, we must necessarily accept all that it says of itself.

We know that it speaks the truth when it tells us about ourselves, therefore we accept its testimony as true when it speaks of itself. The woman of Samaria said,

John 4

²⁹ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?

So we know that the testimony of the Bible is the testimony of that same One.

The Pharisees found fault with Christ because He said,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world.

They said:

¹³ You bear record of yourself; your record is not true.

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said unto them; though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but you cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

¹⁷ It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

¹⁸ I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.

The Pharisees could not see the Father, and therefore they would not accept Christ's testimony concerning himself. If they had believed Jesus, they would have *known* that His testimony was true. It is by faith that we understand. He who believes has evidence of the strongest kind. He who believes God's word, accepting it not as the word of man, but as it is indeed, the word of God, knows that the Spirit of God is witnessing through it.

There is sufficient evidence to enable anybody to accept the Bible as the word of God; but the strongest evidence of all comes to the man after he has believed. This evidence can never be exhausted or measured, but becomes stronger the longer it is considered.



16. The Secret of Reformation

Present Truth, November 17, 1892

WHEN Wycliffe was translating, or was about to translate, the Bible into the English language, he wrote these words:

As the faith of the church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in their true meaning the better; and inasmuch as secular man should assuredly understand the faith they profess, that faith should be taught them in whatever language may be best known to them. Forasmuch, also, as the doctrines of our faith are more clearly and exactly expressed in the Scriptures, than they may probably be by priests,—seeing, if I may so speak, that many prelates are but too ignorant of Holy Scripture, while others conceal many parts of it; and as the verbal instructions of priests have many other defects,—the conclusion is abundantly manifest that believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand. For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instruction, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded on Holy Writ,—since the Scriptures contain the whole truth. And this translation of them into English should therefore do at least this good, namely placing priests and bishops above suspicion as to the parts of it which they profess to explain. Other means, such as the friars, prelates, the Pope, may all proved defective; and to provide against this, Christ and His apostles evangelized the greater portion of the world, by making known the Scriptures to the people in their own language. To this end, indeed, did the Holy Spirit endow them with the knowledge of tongues. Why, then, should not the living disciples of Christ do in this respect as they did?

The work of translating the Scriptures into the language of the people has now been almost completed. Since the days of Tyndale it has been an easy matter for anyone to get a copy of the Bible in the English language, and the Book has been translated into almost every language under heaven. Still the work of the Reforma-

tion is not complete. It is not enough that the Bible should be furnished in the language of the people; it must be read and studied by the people. It is of little use to have the Bible, if the words of man are to be taken as to what it means, instead of reading it for one's self. To too great an extent at the present day, as in the days of Christ, when the people had the Bible in their own tongue, the fear of God is taught by the commandments of men, rather than by the word of God. So the work of the true teacher is to take the Bible which the people have ready to their hand, and bring them face to face with it.

To be a follower of the Reformers does not mean to believe just what they believed, and nothing more. To be a worthy follower of the Reformers is to be activated by the same spirit that moves them. That was loyalty to the word of God. Their principle was that the Bible should settle all questions; that it, and it alone, was the truth. They did not know all that the Bible teaches. No man has ever yet known it all. Sometimes, also, they were mistaken in their views of Scripture, and made the common mistake of teaching what they *thought* instead of what they *knew*. Whether a man is right or wrong, if we follow the man we shall surely go wrong; for at the best we shall get only partial truth; but if we follow the Scriptures just as they read, we cannot make a mistake. Only they are true followers of the Reformers, who have the same loyalty to the word that they had, regardless of what they thought about certain points.

Let the question which Wycliffe asked be pondered well; why should not the living disciples of Christ do as the disciples of old did, in bringing the Bible to the people, that they may read it without the interpretation of men? When this is done as it should be, there will be a greater Reformation than has ever yet been known.

17. Holding Forth the Word

Present Truth, December 1, 1892

AFTER reading the article in this paper concerning how to understand the Word, some may inquire,

“Since every one who reads may understand, if he will but consider the word, what is the use of having teachers?”

If the teachers put themselves between the learner and the word of the Lord, and presume to be the guardians of it, so that none may expect to receive it except as they “interpret” it, there is no need of having them. The more such teachers there are in the world, the worse off the world is.

But God has set teachers in the church, and that shows that there is a place for them; and they should know what that place is, and keep it. That place is:

- To open the word, and direct the attention of the people to it.
- To lift up Christ before the people through His word.
- To hold forth the word of life.
- To speak, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches.”⁶⁸

The greatest work that any man can do in this world is to direct the minds of men to the plain word of God, and to set them face to face with it, so that in it they will behold the face of Jesus Christ, and thus by it be transformed into the same image.

⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:13.

18. Present Truth

Present Truth, December 1, 1892 (reprinted in August 22, 1895)

Note: In this article, Waggoner explains the reason for naming the periodical, "Present Truth."

IN *2 Peter* 1:12 we read,

2 Peter 1

¹² Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the *present truth*.

What is present truth? It is truth that is with us; and the revisers have given an exact rendering of the original in these words,

"Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and are established in the truth which is with you."

To whom is this addressed?

2 Peter 1

¹ To them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

That is, to all Christians in every age. What is this present truth, or this truth which is with us? Jesus said,

John 14

⁶ I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Moreover, He is always with us, for He says,

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

And He is always the same, for we read again,

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

This, then, is the present truth, the truth that is ever present with us. He who grows in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ, is growing in the knowledge of the truth. To hold up this truth is the sole object of this paper.



19. How to Understand the Bible

Present Truth, December 1, 1892

WE read that:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The psalmist says,

Psalms 119

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

And again,

¹¹ Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

He says also,

²³ Princes did sit and speak against me; but your servant did meditate in your statutes.

All these texts show the necessity of understanding the word of God. The exhortation to study the word, and a statement of what will be gained by so doing, is found in:

Proverbs 6

²⁰ My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother:

²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart, and tie them about your neck.

²² When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you.

²³ For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

All this is on the supposition that the word is studied. No benefit can be derived from a guide-book that is not consulted. The Scriptures are to be meditated upon; but no one can meditate in that which he has not in his mind.

But who are they who are expected to have the Scriptures stored up in their minds? We are told that...

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Not one man, nor merely one class of men, are to live by the word of God, but all men. They are to *live* by the word. That does not mean just a small portion of the time, but all the time. A person's life is all that he is; all he thinks, and speaks, and does. Therefore the word of God dwelling in the heart is to be to the guide in all the affairs of life. It will thoroughly furnish the man unto all good works. There is no situation in life, no combination of circumstances, in which the Bible will not tell us what to do, if we but learn to know and heed its teachings.

When Christ was upon earth He spoke to all classes of people, and it is recorded that...

Mark 12

³⁷ ...the common people heard Him gladly.

Among the marks that His mission was Divine, and that He was really the Son of God was this, that...

Luke 7

²² ...to the poor the Gospel is preached.

The poor are those who have the least opportunity of acquiring the learning of the school; therefore it was to the uneducated that the Gospel was preached. And they understood it, too, because they flocked to hear His teaching. But the Scriptures, as a whole, are but the words of Christ, and therefore may be understood as well as the words which He spoke when He was on the earth.

Take, for instance, the epistles. They were mostly written to the churches. In those churches there were but few learned men.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

In the churches, therefore, there were laboring men, and farmers, and tradespeople. They all had to work for their living. They were the class of people who, in these days, say that they “have no time to study the Bible.” Yet the fact the epistles were written to them shows that it was expected that they would understand them. The epistles were simply letters written for their instruction, correction, and comfort. Since the common people who lived in the days when the epistles were written could understand them, surely the people who live in these days can also understand them.

But how are the common people to understand the Bible? Is it by their own reading? or by having somebody read it for them, and give them the meaning? Evidently the former; for if the common people were not to understand the words of Christ for themselves, He would not have spoken to them, and the apostles would not have written to them. For any one to say that common people cannot understand the Scriptures without some interpreter to tell them what it means, is to say that Christ is a respecter of persons, or else that He cannot speak simply enough to be understood by the unlearned. It is to say that God is dependent upon men to make himself understood. It is also the same as saying that some men are greater than God, in that they can do what God cannot do. In short, that idea exalts a certain class of people to the place of God. This is the characteristic of the Papacy, for the Papacy arose by means of this very idea. Of this we shall speak more in another place.

Mark 10

¹³ And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them.

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Matthew 11

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes.

²⁶ Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight.

So it seems that instead of one having to be learned in the wisdom of this world, in order to understand the Bible, it is necessary for him to come down to the level of a little child. The wise man who trusts in his wisdom, and who thinks to understand the Scriptures by it, does not stand so good a chance as the child. This effectively settles the question as to whether or not poor and ignorant people may understand the Bible.

What is the wisdom of childhood? It is simple belief. A child, before it has been deceived by its parents or others, knows nothing of doubt. It is simple enough to believe all that is told it. And this is its only hope of learning. If a child of four years had the doubt that is sometimes boasted of by older people, he would never learn anything. Unfortunately, this confidence is too often abused, and the child learns that people do not always mean what they say. Yet it takes a great deal of deceit to drive the spirit of belief entirely from the heart of a child. But God never deceives.

Titus 1

² [He] cannot lie.

Therefore every one may depend upon His word just as implicitly as the child naturally does upon the word of its mother. And this is the only way in which the truth of God may be known.

This is what the Lord meant when He said that whosoever did not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, could not enter therein.

This is the secret of understanding the Bible. Take it just as it reads, and believe that it means just what it says. When the Bible makes a plain declaration, accept it for just what it says, and do not go somewhere else, to some other book, or to some man, to find out what it means. When the writer was a boy he often used to read the New Testament aloud to some older persons. Very naturally he would ask what certain texts meant. The text would then be “explained.” But occasionally the answer would be,

“That means what it says.”

And thus the idea was conveyed that sometimes the Bible means what it says, but that most commonly it means something different. It took a long time to recover from the effects of such teaching, and to learn that when the Lord speaks He always means just what He says. It is true that there is always in every text a great deal more meaning than we can perceive, for the word of the Lord is infinite, and sometimes we cannot at first perceive any meaning whatever; but it is there in the words that God has caused to be written, and the meaning cannot be found anywhere else.

There are two principle causes why people find the Bible difficult, even after they give assent to the fact that it means what it says, and think that they believe in it. The first is the power of preconceived opinions. They come to the study of the Bible with certain fixed ideas, and they think that they must find those ideas in it. When they read a certain passage that conflicts in any degree with their ideas, they modify the statement to agree with their ideas. This they do unconsciously. But they do not mean to put their ideas in the place of the Bible statement, but they are so firmly persuaded that their ideas are according to Scripture that they think the passage in question must be toned down a little to agree with some other text. This suggests a principle that must be

grasped and firmly adhered to before one can hope to get any real benefit from the Bible; and it is this:

The Bible means just what it says in every text.

No text can modify another, so as to make it mean less, or anything different from its plain reading. True, no one text tells all that may be said upon any subject, or else there would not be another one written on the same subject; but every text must be allowed to stand just as it is written.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

⁶ Add not unto His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

The other cause is the impatience of the reader. He cannot wait for an understanding of the text. He must know at once. So he rushes off to a commentary, or to some man in whom he has confidence, and inquires for the meaning. Having received an answer, he thinks that he knows the meaning; but he does not. Even though the exact truth be told him, he does not know it. By and by some other commentator or friend will give him another explanation of the same text, and then his doubt is greater than before. The poor man sees that learned men differ, and he wonders,

“How am I to know which is right?”

He could not know, if we were to depend on the testimony of men, for he would never know what man to depend on. But he may know for a certainty, if he will let the Lord tell him.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The knowledge of God is found in His word, and He alone can give the understanding. We do not get light upon the word of God, but we get light from it. The word itself is light. If at the first

we do not perceive the light, that is no evidence that it is not there. It will be revealed to us if we look long enough. The Holy Spirit is given to all who ask for it, and it makes known the things that are freely given to us by the Lord. And here is the rule which the Spirit has given by the mouth of the apostle Paul:

2 Timothy 2

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

Who will with prayerful patience give himself wholly to the consideration of the words of the Lord, and receive that wisdom which will be his guide in this life, and his surety for the life to come?

20. Knowing the Truth

Present Truth, December 29, 1892

THE blessedness of the religion of Christ is the positiveness of the knowledge which it gives. There is no conjecture, no uncertainty, but full assurance.

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Some people think that it is a presumption for anyone to say that he *knows* the truth. They may allow the claim in a general way, but when it comes to a particular thing, they think that the most that any one can safely say is that he thinks he knows. But the Lord has not left us to any such uncertainty as that. He wants a man to know the truth, and to know that he knows it.

Who will know? Those who are humble, and submissive to His will. Jesus said,

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

Hebrews 11

³ By faith we understand.

It is the Spirit of God that gives certainty in knowledge. Jesus said,

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

Again,

1 Corinthians 2

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.

The promise to the people of God is,

Jeremiah 31

³⁴ They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

And that this knowledge is to be obtained in this life is evident from the words of the apostle,

1 John 2

²⁰ But you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.

²⁷ But the anointing which you have of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you; but as the anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

All Christians are to be the light of the world. This they are to be not alone by their lives, but by their word; for even though it may not be the lot of many to teach publicly, they are to...

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ ...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

Now positive knowledge is an absolute necessity on the part of everyone who teaches. He who does not know, has no right to attempt to teach. It is not enough for one to think that he knows; he must know that he knows, or else keep silence. Suppose I meet a man on the road, and he ask me the way to a neighboring village. I am not sure of the way, but I do not like to appear ignorant, and so I point to the east. The man starts in that direction, but it happens that the village lies to the west. I have started him

on the wrong road. If I did not know, it was my duty to tell him so, and he could have asked another man.

It will readily be seen that in such a case positive knowledge is necessary. How much more so must it be when the case is one of eternal life or death? For a professed Christian not to know for a certainty what he believes, is a sin. If he does know, he is but a false light, leading people to destruction, where he himself must also go.

Matthew 15

¹⁴ If the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.

But the positive knowledge of these things that have been already learned, is not all that is embraced in knowing the truth. He who knows the truth indeed, has the Spirit of truth, and therefore he recognizes truth when he sees it, although it may be a point that has never before been brought to his attention. Jesus says,

John 10 [also vs. 4]

²⁷ My sheep know my voice.

Truth is the voice of Christ. He who knows the truth will not have to stand hesitating and doubting and arguing a long time before he knows whether or not to believe the point that is presented to him for the first time. He knows the truth, and so as soon as the point is presented, he knows if it is true, or if it is error. He may not at once perceive all that there is in it, either of truth or error, but he knows if it is truth.

The certainly is not the special privilege of a few, but it is given to all who know the Lord, for He is the truth. He who has it not may know that there is a great deal that he lacks. But he need not go along in that uncertainty, for the promise is,

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not, and it shall be given him.

1893



1. A Slight Mistake

Present Truth, January 12, 1893

SOME time ago Mr. Herbert Spencer charge the apostle Paul with lying, basing his accusation on the words of the apostle, in the 3rd chapter of the book of *Romans*,

Romans 3

⁷ If the truth of God has more abounded through my lie unto His glory, while yet am I also judged as a sinner?

At the time we made a mental comment to the effect that the philosopher did not know what he was talking about. He himself has since admitted the same thing. He confesses that he had not verified the quotation, but depended upon some assistance for accuracy in the statement, and that he had not read the context, and therefore did not perceive the meaning of the apostle. On examining the passage for himself he sees that he was mistaken, and frankly acknowledges it. That is to his credit.

But, at the same time, it should forever discredit him as an opponent of Christianity and the Bible. It places his opposition on the same level with that of the carpenter, who announced that he was glad to find that he need not believe all that the Bible says, because many of its statements could be demonstrated to be impossible. Being pressed for an example, he cited the statements concerning the ark. He said that it was understood to be 450 feet long, 75 feet broad, and 40 feet high, and filled with live animals; and he was sure that had it been that large *the Israelites could not have carried it around with them for forty years!* Opposers of the Bible are never found among those who are best acquainted with it.

2. Nourishing Doubts

Present Truth, January 26, 1893

THERE is nothing in the world more prolific than doubt. A single doubt will multiply itself indefinitely, and it lives and propagates upon air. Let a person air his doubts upon every convenient occasion, and they will flourish. Doubts never diminish by being expressed in words. If you have doubts keep them to yourself, for the sake of others, if not for your own. But, better still, kill them.

The antidote for the poisonous germ of doubt is belief. Settle it in your heart once for all that God's word is true, because He himself is the truth. Then remember that as God is from everlasting to everlasting, so is His truth. It is unchangeable. That which was true yesterday is true today, and will be truth eternally.

Doubt is simply the shadow of a lie, and no lie can overthrow truth. Doubts will come to every man, but the man in whose heart is the love of the truth and the knowledge of God, will let them affect him no more than straws on the ocean obstruct the course of the *Majestic*.

3. Please Harmonize

Present Truth, February 9, 1893

ONE of the most common things to be found in religious papers is a request from some sound earnest correspondent that some text in the Bible be “harmonized” with some other text that is mentioned. Strangely enough in most cases the editors of the papers will proceed without any protest to “harmonize” the texts in question. We have no condemnation to pronounce upon those who do these things, but wish to call attention to the fact, that those who read it may come to the study of the Bible better prepared to receive benefit from it.

Suppose some student of music should take one of the master pieces of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, or Handel, and after glancing it through two or three times, should ask his teacher to “harmonize” it for him, so that he could play it understandingly. The disgust of the teacher would probably almost prevent any reply for a while, but he would at last tell the student that the harmony was already there; that the master put it there when he wrote the piece; and that he must study it until he is able to see the harmony. To the student it might at first seem a hopeless task, but if he has patience, and a love for music, he will study away at the composition, working out difficult cords, until finally the grand harmony is open to his understanding. Then he will go on for years enjoying it, his appreciation of it ever increasing; and his enjoyment of it will be the greater because of his previous study. It does not need that one should be a musician to know that there is no other way than this for a person to appreciate the work of the great composers. Why should not the Bible be treated as fairly?

David prayed to the Lord,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The same God to whom he prayed exists today, and is ready to answer that prayer for any person who prays it, as he was to answer it in David's case. When the two disciples walked to Emmaus, and Jesus drew near and walked with them, their hearts burned within them, as He opened to them the Scriptures; and afterwards, in the upper chamber, where the twelve were gathered together, Jesus opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.⁶⁹ Although we cannot see Him with our eyes, He is just as near and just as able to instruct those who ask Him today, as He was then.

When the Scriptures were written, the harmony was put in them by the great Master.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

One Spirit inspired the whole of the Bible, and so there is the most perfect agreement between all its parts. This agreement may not be always apparent to the casual reader, any more than the harmony in the great musical compositions is apparent at a glance; but the right kind of study will always reveal it.

The greatest hindrance to the understanding of the Scriptures is the attitude which people assume towards it. They come at it in a spirit of challenge. They put it on the defensive. When a plain declaration is read in one text, they immediately refer to another text, and say,

"I don't see how that can be, in view of what this text says."

So they put the two texts in antagonism. Such a position shuts off the possibility of understanding the Bible.

⁶⁹ See *Luke* 24:45.

Hebrews 11

³ By faith we understand.

The truths of God are revealed to faith, not to mere human intellect. There is no discount upon intellect, for it is a gift of God; but it is to be subject to faith, and to be instructed by it. That means simply that human reason is to be subject to God, for faith is the laying hold of God. Belief, implicit belief, of the Bible, is the necessary condition of understanding it. He who does not believe it cannot understand; and nobody believes the Bible, when he comes to it in a spirit that will even in thought put one text in antagonism to another.

In order to understand the Bible we must come to it with the positive knowledge that it is inspired by God. We must know that in consequence of that inspiration it is perfectly harmonious throughout. Then when we come to a text that *seems* to be in contradiction to another or to a line of other texts, we can say,

“I know that there is perfect harmony between these texts, although I cannot see it now. I will therefore give them careful and prayerful consideration, that I may see it.”

The problem is half solved then. The Holy Spirit was given for the express purpose of leading people into the truth, and will still do it. The Spirit is freely given to all who will sincerely ask for it.

One thing should never be lost sight of. That is, that the Bible itself is a light. The words of God are light. The Scriptures are not so difficult as people have been led to suppose. It is an insult to the Lord to teach that He is not able to make His revelation to men so plain that they could understand it. He has said just what He wanted to, and in just the way to convey the exact meaning that He wanted conveyed. The words themselves contain the meaning, and he who will consider them humbly and prayerfully, will understand them.

When the apostle Paul wrote the words of God to Timothy, he said,

2 Timothy 2

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

How can this be? Here is the answer:

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

That is, the understanding of the words of the Bible is in those words. He who reads the words without any bias or prejudice or any selfish ends to serve, who asks the enlightenment of the Spirit, and who is careful to find out exactly what they do say, and does not put into them something which they do not say, will understand just what God wants him to understand by them. But the trouble with too many is, that they come to the study of the Bible with certain ideas already fixed which they of course think that the Bible teaches, and then because they cannot harmonize the Bible with those ideas, they think that the Bible is a very difficult book. One of the most common things in the world is for a man to read a text, and then almost unconsciously to assume that it means a certain thing, which is not stated in the text at all.

“Theology” is a human invention. We find nothing about it in the Bible. It is the attempt of men to make the Bible harmonize with human ideas, or rather, an attempt to get the semblance of Bible support for human notions. Men will make a statement of belief, and then will say that they can find Bible authority for it. A common form of expression is,

“The Bible supports me in this.”

Thus the Bible is reduced to the level of a mere backer of man’s ideas. Man is first, and the Bible is second. Instead of man’s reading the words of God, and then agreeing with them, the man puts forth his own ideas, and then tries to show that God agrees with him. This is a reversal of the true order.

This method of dealing with the Bible originated with the heathen philosophers who came into the church in the second and third centuries, bringing their heathen notions with them. These men were learned, and so they were at once put into the place of teachers. But they knew nothing but the precepts of heathen philosophy, and therefore could not teach anything else. But it was necessary that as professed Christian teachers they should use the Bible, and so they brought in the Bible to “support their views.” So the fear of God was taught by the precepts of men, instead of the words of the Lord.

Thus “theology” became a science, and the knowledge of the Bible was supposed to rest with a very few favored ones. They doled this knowledge out to the common people as they pleased. As it was held that the words of the Bible do not mean just what they say, it was necessary for these men to “interpret” it. But this they could do only by putting themselves in the place of God, and their thoughts in the place of His thoughts. Thus it was the Papacy arose. Now there can be no Reformation that does not reverse this process. The true reformation must put the word of God above everything else, and men must step away from between it and the people. The common people, who heard the Lord, when He was on earth, must be allowed to come close to Him through His word, and must be taught that the word of God is addressed to them in language that they can understand, if they will receive it as the word of God. What men need is not the study of theology, but the study of the word of God.

4. Studying Error to Learn Truth

Present Truth, February 9, 1893

WE LATELY READ a list of the qualifications of a minister of the Gospel, among which was this, that...

“...he should be well abreast of the latest destructive Biblical criticism, so as to refute its arguments.”

The idea that in order to refute error men must study it, is altogether too common. It shows itself in the idea that in order to avoid evil, men must go where it is, and learn all about it.

If people reasoned the same way with regard to food, everybody would soon die. If they thought that in order to be able to detect poison, and guard their children from it, they must taste all the poisons that are known, the fallacy would soon be exposed. There are very few men, comparatively, who know all about poisons. What do the people do who are ignorant of poisons? Why, they sensibly determine to taste nothing which they do not know to be wholesome, and thus they escape all danger.

Some parents make the mistake of warning their children against all sorts of evil, so that they may be able to avoid it. This is well illustrated by the following. A mother called out to her son,

“Tom, are you teaching that parrot to swear?”

The reply was,

“No, I am just teaching it what words it must not say.”

Of course those would be the very words that the parrot would use. And so it is with children. If they are told all about the evil that is in the world, they will be sure to try it. Let their minds be filled with that which is good, and they will have less tendency to follow the evil. Then when they see or hear of evil practices or

teachings, they will be able at once to detect the evil by its contrast with the truth and the good with which they are familiar.

The person who sets himself the task of studying all the forms of error, has an endless task before him. The result will be that he will never get to the study of truth. The minister who studies the works of infidels, and of the destructive critics of the Bible, will be apt to feed the flock on the driest kind of husks. The carpenter does not try to find all the crooked sticks in the world, so that he may recognize a crook when he sees it, but he simply learns the use of the square, and then he can in a moment tell whether or not a stick is straight.

The inspired advice of the apostle Paul should be heeded by all:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ But continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them.

Stick to the truth; with error we need have nothing to do.

5. Studying the Bible

Present Truth, March 23, 1893⁷⁰

Proverbs 2:1-6

FEW people know how to really study the Bible. And this is not always because they do not know how to study at all, for very often those who are good students otherwise, are poor students of the Bible, even though they want to understand it. In *Proverbs* we are told how to study the Bible so as to understand it. Let us read the passage:

Proverbs 2

¹ My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

² So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

³ Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Digging for Gold

When a man is convinced that there is rich silver or gold ore in a certain place, what does he do? He goes right there and digs *in that very place*. But how do people generally do with the Bible? Why as soon as they light upon a portion where there is special treasure,—and that means a place where there is special difficulty,—they immediately go off to some other place to dig. If they went to some other part of the Bible it would not be so bad, for there is treasure everywhere in the Bible, and whoever finds it in one place will be better able to find it in another; but they generally go to a library and begin to dig among the commentators, or they ask their pastor or some friend what he thinks it means. It is as though a man should find indications of gold in a certain place,

⁷⁰ This article was slightly revised and republished in 1901. See the article, “How to Study the Bible.”

and should straightway go off a hundred miles and begin digging. People are not so foolish as that in temporal matters.

Examine Every Part

Another point: When a man is digging for silver or gold, he carefully examines every portion of the soil where he is digging. Whoever has seen men washing out gold knows that every particle of the soil is carefully examined. No matter what the style of mining, everything is in some way closely scrutinized.

Here then we have the simple directions for studying the Bible. First go to the Bible itself, and to the particular passage which you wish to understand, and then give the most careful and patient attention to every sentence and every word. Let your mind dwell upon every word and every clause, noting its relation to what precedes and what follows, until you know for a certainty just *what it says*.

Not Merely Memorization

Do not sit down to commit the passage to memory so that you can repeat it parrot-like. That is not study. But question the text, asking a question and letting the words of the text give the answer, until you cannot possibly think of it without thinking the very words. Many people who read the Bible a great deal do not know what it says, because they read it carelessly, and do not let the Bible itself form their ideas. No one can hope to understand any portion of the Bible when he does not know for a certainty just what it says. This is self-evident, for it applies to everything.

The Lord Gives Understanding

When the student knows what the text says, then what? Here is the instruction,

2 Timothy 2 [RV]

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

How will He give us the understanding? By our considering what He says. That is, while we are diligently considering the text, the understanding of the text will come from the text itself. From what other place should we expect it to come?

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The meaning of what the Lord says is in just the very words that He says.

Patience and Submission

How long must one consider the words before he can understand it? That depends upon several things. We must be prepared to consider them for ten years, if need be, without getting impatient. We must have such confidence that wisdom and knowledge do come from the very words of the Lord that we shall be assured that they are really there, and that they are nowhere else. But much depends on the spirit in which we approach the study. The Spirit of God is the source whence the Bible comes; the Spirit is the life and power and wisdom of the word. When we come with hearts submissive to the Spirit, we shall not have to wait so long as we otherwise would.

Remember that the righteousness of God is revealed to faith, and not to intellect. That does not put any discount upon intellect, but it simply exalts faith. God has given man talents of intellect, and expects him to use them, but not without faith. A very feeble intellect with faith will understand the Bible far more readily and more perfectly, than a giant intellect without faith.

Consider the Connection

At the same time that one particular passage is being thus *studied*, do not neglect the reading and studying of other parts of the Bible. The Bible is a unit; one Spirit and one truth is in it all; and every part is thus directly connected with every other part. If the particular passage under special consideration is in the middle of

a chapter, the student will find it necessary to extend his careful study back to the beginning of the chapter, and even to the beginning of the book; for no book in the Bible, unless it be *Proverbs* and *Psalms*, is made up of detached thoughts. A line of thought runs through each, and every text should be considered in its full connection. Then when it is used in the study of any special subject, it will not be misapplied.

A Thousand Ways

When the mind thus gets accustomed to dwelling upon the Scriptures, it is wonderful how light will come. Almost anything may serve to cause the light to shine forth from the word. While reading some other portion of the Bible, while listening to a discourse, in conversation even upon some other subject,—in short, in a thousand different ways,—the mind may be directed to the text that has been studied, and the light will shine forth. No one can tell in what way the Spirit will work, and what means it will use to lead the soul into the truth; only let it be remembered that in any case it is the Spirit that guides, and that the knowledge gained comes from the word itself, and not from any other source.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

6. The Word of the Lord

Signs of the Times, April 3, 1893

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed.

WE HAVE already read that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of old, testifying. It said:

2 Samuel 23

² The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.

We have suggested such expressions in the New Testament as,

Acts 1

¹⁶ ...the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke;

Acts 4

²⁵ Who by the mouth of your servant David have said;

Luke 1

⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began, etc.

These and other scriptures show that the Bible is emphatically the word of God. Read also the following words:

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

This is the case with “all Scripture,”⁷¹ and is just what is stated in the text at the head of this article.

How much is included in the term “prophecy”? This can best be answered by considering the meaning of the word “prophet.” This term we find defined in God’s words to Moses. When Moses per-

⁷¹ 2 Timothy 3:16.

sistently sought to evade God's commission to go back to Egypt on the ground that he was not eloquent,

Exodus 4

¹⁴ ...the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Your brother, Aaron, is a good speaker. And he is coming here to look for you, and will be very happy when he finds you.

¹⁵ So I will tell you what to tell him, and I will help both of you to speak well, and I will tell you what to do.

¹⁶ And he shall be your spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to you instead of a mouth, and you shall be to him instead of God.

Now read:

Exodus 7

¹ And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.

What part did Aaron have to act? Simply to utter the words that Moses gave him. He was the spokesman for Moses; he was to him as a mouth. But he is called a prophet to Moses. Therefore we know that a prophet is one who speaks for another; who utters not his own words, but the words of another. Therefore a prophet of God is one who speaks for God; and speaks not his own words, but the words of God.

John 3

³⁴ For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him.

So this definition of a prophet carried out in the prophecy concerning Christ, in:

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

A prophet, therefore, is one who speaks the words of God, and consequently prophecy must be that which is spoken by the Lord through a prophet. But this embraces the entire Bible. Of course, there can be no question in regard to what are known as the prophet's books. But the *Psalms* are prophecy, for they are often quoted as such in the New Testament. They are full of predictions concerning Christ and His coming. So the words here quoted concerning the principal writer of the *Psalms* in *2 Samuel* 23:2.

The five books of Moses are prophecy by the same rule, but they were written by one of the greatest prophets. So *Deuteronomy* 34:10. He who reads these books understandingly, will find them full of prophecy endorsing future events. When Jesus met with His disciples after His resurrection, He said,

Luke 24

⁴⁴ And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

But how about the historical books of the Bible? They must also come under the book of prophecy, for the writers of these books were invariably prophets. They were inspired as well as the rest of the Scriptures. Let it be noted well that we are not stating any theory of inspiration,—we are not attempting to show how the Scriptures are inspired, nor to settle any question as to “degrees of inspiration”—but are simply considering what the scriptures themselves say of the *fact*. We do not profess to tell *how much* any portion of Scripture is inspired, for it is all infinite and cannot be measured. He who presumes to measure the “degrees of inspiration” might as well set himself to tell how much more power the Lord exerted in creating the sun than in creating the earth or how much harder work it was for Him to make the earth, than to make a blade of grass. We simply know that the infinite power of God was required to make the smallest object in nature and we are content. So we are content with knowing that...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,

–without trying to weigh God’s words in the balances of poor human reason.

So in regard to the historical books of the Bible we may not say that they are inspired as much as the rest of the Bible, for that would be to imply a measurement of inspiration; but we can say that they come from the same Divine Source as the rest. All are given by the same inspiration of God.

Some will say,

“Surely it cannot be necessary to consider the narratives of the Bible inspired; anybody can write out that which passes before his eyes, or that which he has experienced.”

It is a fact that it is comparatively easy to write out what one thinks about a thing, but it is quite another matter to be sure that it is the absolute truth. No human writer can set down the truth and the whole truth in regard to any event in history. Only God can do that, and it is because the historical records of the Bible are His words, that they can be depended on.

But there is something that is not often considered in reading the historical records of the Bible, and that is the object for which they were written. It was not simply to gratify curiosity concerning things that have taken place in the past, but for our guidance in the present.

Romans 15

⁴ Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10

¹¹ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Now note the prophetic element in sacred history. In the direct predictions we find set forth the things that are to take place in the last days. The power to foretell future events is clearly recognized as supernatural. In the history we find that which directs us perfectly how we ought to act when the things come that are predicted. Our past tells what is coming, the other part exactly fits man's need when the thing comes. And not only does it meet the need of one man, but of every man in all time. Surely sacred history is prophecy.

This matter might be carried farther, but this is sufficient. Let the reader note the frequent occurrence in the Bible of the expressions, "And the Lord said." "The word of the Lord came unto me," etc. Let him learn to receive the entire Bible as the word of God, and then remember that it is written that...

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

7. Essentials and Non-essentials

Present Truth, May 4 & September 14, 1893

Pertaining to Truth

Present Truth, May 4, 1893

IT IS a very common thing for people to regard truth as of two kinds: essential and non-essential, important and unimportant. This is a great mistake. All truth is one, and cannot be divided into classes. Every point of truth is of equal importance with every other point. Truth is of God, for Jesus Christ whom He has sent is the truth. But the riches of Christ are unsearchable. He is infinite, therefore the truth is infinite. But there can be no comparison of infinities. To the human mind, at least, all infinities are equal. So the only thing necessary to be determined is whether or not a thing *is true*. If *it is*, then no matter how unimportant it may *seem* to human understanding, we may be sure that it cannot be ignored without sin.

In a perfect machine the smallest bolt is as important and necessary as the largest shaft, for the reason that without the bolt the shaft would be useless. So in God's perfect word the smallest matter is as important as what are called the great things. God has not wasted His time on non-essentials. He does not speak that which is of no importance.

Proverbs 30

⁶ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

⁷ Add not unto His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

Pertaining to the Christian Religion

Present Truth, September 14, 1893

What are the "essentials" and "non-essentials" of the Christian religion? From the ideas expressed by people on the subject it would seem that the "non-essentials" of Christian faith and practice were very numerous. No one, perhaps, would be able to define just what they are, still the belief in their existence is both

wide-spread and firm. Of course, if the “non-essentials” cannot be defined, it is equally impossible to say what constitutes the “essentials.” In practice, each individual adjusts the matter to suit himself. The “essentials” he endeavors to put in practice, and the “non-essentials” are practiced so long as their observance is not a matter of too great inconvenience.

There has been an effort made for many years to bring about a union of the various bodies of Christendom upon the basis of these “essentials” of the Christian faith, but the movement has made little progress. The united wisdom of these various bodies has not been able to produce a satisfactory statement of what these essentials are. The prospect, to many minds, is an alluring one; but the more the ground is explored from which the proposed union must come, the more does the subject become involved in obscurity. There is a vagueness about it which prevents the promoters of the enterprise from getting hold of anything tangible. The basis upon which it must rest is altogether unstable.

Turning to the Bible, from whence all truth upon questions of Christian faith and practice must be drawn, we find it altogether silent regarding the “non-essentials” of which we are speaking. The only information it gives on the subject is of a negative kind. And this fact is sufficient to account for the confusion that exists with regard to it in the minds of men; the question is one which exists only in the human imagination, and concerning which each man is his own source of authority. The only authority on the subject—other than the negative information of the Scriptures—is human reasoning, dictated by self-interests. When God wrote the Bible to tell man what things he must do to be saved, He left the non-essentials out. Whatever the Bible has set forth as man’s duty in this relation to God, is essential; and whatever the Bible has left unmentioned, is not essential. All the practices and forms and observances pertaining to religious worship, that are not specified and enjoined in the Bible, are non-essentials. And they are so entirely non-essential that they have no rightful place in Christian faith or practice whatever.

Bible Warnings

This belief in non-essentials pertaining to the service of God is not peculiar to our own day. It has been manifested in all ages. The Bible tells us of the experience of some who held this belief in ancient times:

1. Cain did not think it essential that his sacrifice should consist of a lamb, as Abel's did, and he brought the fruits of the ground, but his offering was not accepted.

2. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, on one occasion did not think it essential to offer one particular kind of incense before the Lord in the tabernacle;

Leviticus 10

² And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

3. King Saul did not think it essential that a sacrifice to God should be offered by one particular man when it necessitated a long delay, so he offered the sacrifice himself. The sacrifice was the essential thing; the particular person offering it was a non-essential. But when Samuel who was to have offered the sacrifice, appeared, he told Saul that obedience was an essential thing, and that the kingdom should be taken from him for his transgression.

4. The ancestors of the idolatrous heathen did not think it essential to worship God in the particular way that was practiced by those who feared God, and decided it would make no difference if they worshiped Him through something that their eyes could behold, just as Roman Catholics today think it makes no difference if they worship God through an image, since it is God, and not the image that they worship. But the result was that...

Romans 1

²² ...they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

And their descendants speedily sunk into the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation. It is not necessary to refer to all the examples given us on this point. It is evident enough that man, in venturing upon this ground, does so at a terrible risk. It is evident that the wise and only safe course to be pursued, is to regard nothing as non-essential which is enjoined upon us in God's word.

It is at the peril of our souls that people undertake to decide that there are essentials and non-essentials in that which concerns their duty to God, and to determine what these are. When God speaks, it is man's place to hear and obey, without reference to his own views of what the situation requires; and when God has not spoken, it is man's place to know nothing on that point, and to be silent both in word and deed.

8. Words and Work

Present Truth, June 1, 1893

IT IS a common saying that “words are cheap,” and that is much easier to say than to do. And this is true, as concerns men. The Saviour said of the scribes and Pharisees,

Matthew 23

³ They say, and do not.

The difference between saying and doing is also forcibly shown by the Apostle James, thus:

James 2

¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.

Words are of no more value than the one who utters them. If a man is a pauper, his promise to pay money is worthless. So if a man has no goodness in him, all his promises of goodness are but empty wind. And since...

Romans 3

¹² ...there is none that does good, no, not one,

—it follows that there is none whose promises to do right are of any worth. The Scripture says,

Psalms 39

⁵ Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

Therefore the best promises of men are mundane things. Well is it for man that God does not ask him to make promises, but simply to accept the promises of God. On the principle that a word is worth only what the one who utters it is worth, the word of God is worth everything. His word is a real thing; it is not simply

sound, but it is substance. While it is an easy thing for man to say and not do, it is a far different thing with God. With Him saying and doing are the same. His word is itself work.

Romans 4

¹⁷ [He] calls those things that be not as though they were,

—because when He speaks they come into being.

Two utterances of the Saviour set this thing forth in a very forcible manner. When Philip asked to be shown the Father, Jesus told him that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father; and then He continued,

John 14

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

At first thought it would seem that in the above statement the Saviour made an abrupt change. He began to speak about words, and ended up with works. As proof that He represented the Father, He said,

¹⁰ The *words* that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the *works*.

We should naturally expect that the antithesis of the statement:

“The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself,”

—would be,

“But the Father that dwells in me, He speaks them.”

This would have been the exact truth, as we shall see presently; and it was in reality what Jesus said, because God's words are works. In *John* 8:28 we have the same thing stated in opposite terms:

John 8

²⁸ Then said Jesus unto them, When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things.

Here He started out with a statement about works, and ended up with words. As in the previous text we are taught that the words of God are works, so here we are taught that the works of God are all in His word. With God a word and a work are the same thing. With Him to say is to do.

Christ, as the only representative of Divinity to man, spoke the words of God. To Moses it had long before been said,

Deuteronomy 18

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

Therefore Christ, as God, has the power described in *Romans* 4:17:

Romans 4

¹⁷ [He] quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were.

The words which Christ spoke brought the dead to life. When the nobleman came to Jesus, entreating Him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death, Jesus did not go, but said to the father,

John 4

⁵⁰ Go your way; your son lives,

—and the son was healed that instant. Even so,

Psalms 107

²⁰ He sent His word, and healed them.

Among all the works of the Lord, the heavens stand forth the most prominent.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

Hebrews 1

¹⁰ You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands.

But now read,

Psalm 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Genesis 2

² And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which God created and made.

Here we learn that God's words are His works. He works by speaking. As soon as He had finished speaking, the work was all done. Therefore we see that it is impossible for God to speak and not do. This is the reason that...

2 Corinthians 1

²⁰ All the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yes, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

But we have an explicit statement that the word of the Lord works. The Apostle Paul wrote,

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

What a solid basis this gives for faith! With what confidence we may make our requests to God! We may rest upon His word, knowing that as it upholds the universe, it is able also to hold us up. When we are in need, and lift up our hearts to God, the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance some of the words of the Lord.

When those words are thus brought to our minds, we are to accept them as the answer to our prayers. We are not merely to think of them as promising something that will be done in the future, but as actually doing all that they say.

1 John 5

¹⁴ If we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears us;

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Christ as the Prince of Peace, came preaching peace.

Ephesians 2

¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Psalms 85

⁸ I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for He will speak peace unto His people.

Therefore when the Lord speaks peace to us, we have His peace. He speaks righteousness; and since His word is life itself, and works, if we take His word, just as He speaks it, without any human modification, we have His righteousness. And the righteousness which comes by the word is active righteousness, because the word of the Lord works actively in all that believe.

This one thing must not be lost sight of, however, and that is that it is only the word of the Lord that is work. Everything else is vanity. Only life can produce life. That which is dead, can produce only death. Therefore we must be sure to take only the word of the Lord, and must not modify it or add to it. Everything else will fail, but the word of the Lord abides forever. Therefore,

Acts 20

³² [We] commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

9. The Bible

Present Truth, June 1, 1893

THE Bible is not like any other book. It is Divine; all other books are human. Books which are only the product of the mind of man, may be thoroughly mastered by the mind of another man. But the Bible is the production of the Spirit of God, and therefore can be understood only by the aid of the Spirit of God. When therefore the Bible is studied, whether in the home, the school, or the church, merely as an ordinary text book, its object is perverted. Men say that it is as necessary to study the history recorded in the Bible as that recorded in any other book. Yes, it is a great deal more necessary, for the Bible history is the only key to all other; but it is only when we study it as inspired history that we get any benefit from it. It is utterly impossible to get a correct idea of the Bible narratives, if we do not study them in the light of God's great plan.

More than this, it is a sin to regard the Bible as an ordinary book, and to study it as one would Caesar's "commentaries" or Green's "History of the English People." One of the great sins of the Jewish priest was that they...

Ezekiel 22

²⁶ ...put no difference between the holy and profane.

Anyone who regarded the Bible as he would a book of profane history, does incalculable injury to his own soul. He not only misses the point of the historical narrative but he makes it more and more difficult for him to be impressed by sacred things. Let the Bible be studied as the word of God, and it will impart wisdom that will be the wonder of the world.⁷²

⁷² See *Deuteronomy* 4:5-6.

10. Evolution and the Gospel

Present Truth, June 29, 1893

YEARS AGO, when the subject of evolution began to be generally discussed, the prevailing idea was that it was wholly an infidel scheme in opposition to the Bible. Now, however, things have greatly changed, and we find that evolution is believed and defended by the greater number of religious teachers, and is regarded as an essential part of religion. Indeed, the minister who does not believe in evolution to some extent, is considered greatly behind the times. They feel that it would be dangerous to their reputation as scholars, if they should not agree with the men who have given their whole lives to the study of science.

A Scientific Papacy

Besides, it is claimed that no mere “layman” has any right to express an opinion upon matters purely scientific. The lordly position is taken that the dictum of “scientists” ought to be received without question by common men. But as evolution has to deal with the very fundamental teachings of the Bible, that is the same as saying that none but a privileged class may form a just opinion on all matters of faith. This is the very spirit of the papacy, which will not allow that common people can decide matters of faith for themselves, but that they must accept the decision of their leaders. But this is a thing that God never designed that any man should do. No man on earth has a right to assume the control of another man’s judgment and conscience, and no man has any right to allow another man to so control him.

1 Corinthians 11

⁸ The head of every man is Christ.

The promise of the new covenant is,

Hebrews 8

¹¹ They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.

No man on earth is or ever was wise enough and good enough to stand in the place of Christ to any other man; and no man on earth is so poor and uneducated that he needs another man to stand between him and the Lord, to interpret the will of God to him.

When Christ was on earth, “the common people heard Him gladly,”⁷³ for the reason that they could understand Him. Even the children pressed around Him to catch the gracious words that came from His lips. Those same words are in the Scriptures. In them Christ is speaking to the humble, believing soul as clearly and as plainly as when He was in Judea. The Bible is the living word of the living God. It is able to make a man...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...wise unto salvation;...

¹⁷ ...[to make him] perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And it reveals Christ, who is “the fullness of God.”⁷⁴ Therefore it is a complete revelation, and perfectly adapted to all time. It is inexhaustible.

Now while it is true that the ordinary man cannot follow the scientists through all the mazes of argument by which they reach their conclusions, and it is fortunate that he cannot, it is true that he can take those conclusions when they are stated in plain English, and by comparing them with the Bible can tell whether or not they are true. If this were not true, then there would be no other alternative but an infallible Pope. For it is evident that the people cannot trust every man who may want to teach them. Scientific teachers, like purely religious teachers, differ greatly, and so there must be an infallible teacher to decide among them. But the Lord has provided for this, not in the person of any man, but in the Holy Spirit, which is freely given to all who believe. Thus no man is left to follow blindly the dictum of some other man.

⁷³ *Mark* 12:37.

⁷⁴ *Ephesians* 3:19, 1:23; *Colossians* 1:19, 2:9; *John* 1:16.

Authoritative Statements of Evolution

In the month of April, Professor Henry Drummond delivered a course of lectures in Boston, U.S.A., before the Lowell Institute of that city, taking the *Evolution of Man* as his subject. Those lectures were quite fully reported in the current numbers of the *British Weekly*, from which we shall quote. Professor Drummond is a religious teacher of prominence, and is also a teacher of science, so that in his utterance we have the latest and best theories of evolution from a religious point of view. Let the reader decide whether it is possible for a man to be a believer in the theory of evolution and a believer in the Bible at the same time.

The Professor began his first lecture by saying that he proposed to introduce his hearers to...

...a few of the more recent facts bearing upon the ascent of man.

That when the evolutionist speaks of the “ascent of man,” he refers to the man spiritually as well as physically, is shown by the following statement concerning man:

Should his pedigree prove to be related in undreamed-of ways to that of all other things in nature, “all other things” have that to gain by the alliance, which philosophy and theology have often wished to lower them with, but could never lawfully do. Every step in the proof of the oneness in an evolutionary process of this divine humanity of ours, with all lower things in nature, is a step in the proof of the divinity of all lower things. If evolution can be proved to include man, the whole scheme of nature from that moment assumes a new significance. The beginning can then be interpreted from the end, and the end from the beginning. All that is found in the product must be put into the process.

This is in direct contradiction of the Bible, which declares that...

Ecclesiastes 7

²⁹ God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

These “inventions” are not the discoveries of good things, but the products of the “inventors of evil things,”⁷⁵ on which the Lord takes vengeance.⁷⁶

Ascending or Descending?

Evolution speaks of man as ascending; the Bible speaks of him as having fallen. Which is true? And remember that evolution is entirely independent of faith. It applies to all men and to all things alike. So that while the Bible teaches that men have fallen, and that only through faith in Christ can they rise, evolution teaches that man has never fallen, but has always been ascending.

Evolution, however, discounts the Bible entirely. As Professor Drummond says,

The beginning must be interpreted from the end, not the end from the beginning,

–then the record of the creation and fall of man, as related in *Genesis*, is of no use to us. According to evolution, therefore, even as set forth by a professed Christian teacher, the Bible is not a guide to us, but is to be interpreted by human science. In that case, there would be really no need for the Bible, since the science which interpreted the Bible must be amply sufficient of itself, and the study of the Bible would become merely an unnecessary pastime.

Another Form of Spiritualism

Take the above statement, that “all that is found in the product must be put into the process,” and put it with the following:

Men begin to see undeviating ethical purpose in this world, a tide, that from eternity has never turned, making for perfectness. In that vast procession of nature, that vision of all things from the first of time, moving from low to high, from incompleteness to completeness, from imperfection to perfection, the moral na-

⁷⁵ *Romans* 1:30.

⁷⁶ *Psalms* 99:8.

ture recognizes in all its height and depth the eternal claim upon itself.

What do they teach? This: that man is his own saviour. Not only that, but that every man will be saved; evolution is universalism. Still more, they teach that everything that is in all men is good; for if there is from the beginning a steady tide working in all nature, making for perfectness, and all that is in the product must be put into the process, then it follows that perfectness has been in all men from the very beginning. That is just what evolution means,—an unfolding. Therefore all that the Bible says is evil in man, evolution says is only undeveloped good; and that is simply the teaching of Spiritualism. So evolution is Spiritualism. But let us note further.

A Solution for Despair?

Mr. Drummond says:

The supreme message of Science to this age is that all Nature is on the side of the man who tries to rise. Evolution, development, progress are not only on her program, these are her programs. For all things are rising, all worlds, all planets, all stars and suns. An ascending energy is in the universe, and the whole moves on with one mighty idea and anticipation. The aspiration in the human mind and heart is but the evolutionary tendency of the universe becoming conscious. Darwin's great discovery, or the discovery which he brought into prominence, is the same as Galileo's—that the world moves. The Italian prophet said it moves from west to east; the English philosopher said it moves from low to high. And this is the latest and most splendid contribution of Science to the faith of the world.

With the above, contrast the following declarations of men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:

Hebrews 1

¹⁰ You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands;

¹¹ They shall perish; but You remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment;

¹² And as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed.

Romans 8

²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope,

²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and travails together in pain until now.

Isaiah 64

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Immediately after the last quotation from Professor Drummond, that the discovery of evolution—the movement from low to high—come the following words:

The discovery of a second motion in the earth has come into the world of thought only in time to save the world from despair.

What does that mean? It can mean nothing but that the gospel, which has been in the world for ages, gives man no hope, but on the contrary has plunged the race into despair! The Gospel provides a perfect salvation for all, if they will accept it; yet a professed Christian says that evolution, which means the salvation of all in spite of themselves, is the only thing that stands between man and despair. Can there be any doubt that evolution is only one manifestation of Antichrist?

Which shall we take as a basis for our faith—the “latest contribution of Science,” or the word of the Lord?

What Is Man?

Genesis 1

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the face of the earth.

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 2

⁷ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Psalms 8

⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.

The *Revision* has it,

“You have made him but little lower than God.”

This is what the Lord says; what does evolution say? Read the following:

Nature husbands all it gains. A momentum won is never lost. Each platform reached by the human embryo in its upward course represents the embryo of some lower animal which in some mysterious way has played part in the pedigree of the human race, which may itself long since have disappeared, from off the earth, but is now and forever built into the inmost being of man. These lower animals, each in its successive stage, have stopped short in their development; man has gone on.

Why this contradiction should occur in evolution; why the dog and the monkey should not go on developing into men, and finally into gods, the evolutionists do not explain. But read farther:

The single cell, the first definite stage which the human embryo attains, is still the adult form of countless millions both of ani-

mals and plants. Just as in modern America the millionaire's mansion—the evolved form—is surrounded by laborers cottages,—the simple form,—so in Nature, living side by side with the many celled higher animals, is an immense democracy of unicellular artisans. These simple cells are perfect living things. The earth, the water, and the air, teem with them everywhere. They move, they eat, they reproduce their like. But one thing they do not do—they do not rise. These organisms have, as it were stopped short in the ascent of life. And long as evolution has worked upon the earth, the vast numerical majority of plants and animals are still at this low stage of being. So minute are some of these forms, that if their one-roomed huts were arranged in a row, it would take twelve thousand to form a street a single inch in length. . . . Yet as there was a period in human history when none but cave-dwellers lived in Europe, so there was a time when the highest forms of life upon the globe were these microscopic beings. It is a general scientific fact, however, that over the graves of these myriad aspirants the Animal Man has risen.

If there were any such thing as the evolution of which the Professor speaks, then these microscopic beings would in turn become men, just the same as those others did in the ages past. The acknowledged fact that the microscopic forms “do not rise,” should be sufficient to show the baselessness of the whole evolution fabric.

Indeed, Professor Drummond, for all of his positiveness in regard to evolution, admits that...

...part of this embryological argument is at present founded on analogy,

—and still further, that...

...evolution is after all a vision.

It is a creature of the imagination. The Professor says that...

No one asks more of evolution at present than permission to use it as a working theory. Without some hypothesis no work can ever be done.

But the work that is done with this hypothesis is only evil. A fact is surely more valuable for working than a hypothesis; and the Bible furnishes us with facts, with which righteousness may be worked.

The Origin of Evil

The Bible says,

Romans 5

¹² By one man sin came into the world, and death by sin.

What does evolution say? Let it be remembered that the argument is that man has in his structure the characteristics of all the lower animals out of which he has been evolved. Contrary to the common supposition, however, Professor Drummond says that...

...it is not to be supposed that man is descended from any existing ape.

In fact, the Professor is impartial in his distribution of honors, and gives all the animals a chance. The fishes come in also, the fact that in man there is a connection between the ear and the throat being evidence to his mind that man has brought the remnants of gills as a legacy from his fish ancestors. With this statement the reader can understand what follows on the problem of evil:

If man inherits the gill slits of a shark, is it unscientific to expect that he will also inherit the spirit of a shark?...If man inherits the head of a tiger or a bear, shall not some blood of the tiger or the bear run in his veins? and if the temptation is to let these loose in his family life, are the means for helping him to check it a thing of laughter? It is not to be supposed that his animal past has left nothing more in man than material relics. A father leaves his son his money, his home, his business, his material likeness, it may be, and physical constitution. But these are nothing. His chief legacy is his mind and soul. What mind and soul, what disposition and nature an animal has, that it has partly left in man.

Does the reader detect any lack of harmony between this statement and that of the Scripture? The Bible tells us that the serpent, “which is the devil and Satan,”⁷⁷ beguiled Eve, and that she induced Adam to partake of the forbidden fruit. Adam was not deceived, therefore his was the greater sin. Thus,

Romans 5

¹² By one man sin came into the world.

But evolution, according to the latest and best exposition, tells us that sin came into the world of human beings through all the lower animals. Which will the reader accept?

Removing Evil by Evolution

Do you think that this is not a very serious matter, after all? Then consider the further statement that...

...the problem really is not how sin came into the world, but how to get it out.

And the statement that if science can even in part diagnose the disease, that is a step toward removing it.

If we saw how vestiges disappeared in the animal world, that knowledge might accelerate the disappearance of evil.

Thus we see that the Gospel is wholly ignored as a means of salvation. The disappearance of evil becomes simply a matter of training and education and environment. But the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ has been set forth for the remission—the sending away—of sin. It is by faith, and not simply by education and training.

Acts 4

¹² There is none other name under heaven given among risen, whereby we must be saved.

It is not possible for a man to be an evolutionist and at the same time believe the Bible. The very name contradicts the Bible narra-

⁷⁷ Revelation 20:2.

tive of the fall of man, and thereby denies the necessity for the Gospel. Our views on evolution will doubtless be thought very antiquated. That may be the case; we shall not stop to dispute it, but simply to ask a candid decision of the question as to whether evolution does not contradict the Bible.

The Charge Against Evolution

The charge is this: that it is one of the devil's means of undermining the Gospel, or rather to undermine the sense of need of the Gospel, on the part of men. The only result of its teachings can be an increase of wickedness. And this danger is augmented by the fact that so many men in high position in the church have taken up with it.

1. EVIL IS ONLY UNDEVELOPED GOOD

How does it tend to evil? In this way: As noted above, it teaches that everything naturally tends to rise. It teaches that the perfection which is sure to be seen at the last, exists in every man; so that everything in man is really good, and that evil is only undeveloped good. Therefore there cannot possibly be any incentive on the part of those who are consistent in their belief of evolution, to lay hold of the Gospel of Christ.

2. NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR EVIL HABITS

Moreover evolution, if true, would do away with the possibility of any Judgment day, or of any punishment for sin. For just as the jelly-fish is not to blame for being a jelly-fish, and the undeveloped cell is not to blame for being only a cell, so, if evolution were true, the man who is all deformed by evil habits is not to be held responsible for them. This is the direct teaching of Spiritualism, which is only evolution under another name.

3. NO NEED FOR THE BIBLE

Evolution, by directly contradicting the Bible, lessens its hold upon men; indeed, it cuts them entirely loose from it. Thus they have no safeguard against sin; for the word of God hidden in the heart is the only protection against sin.

4. NO NEED FOR THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

The record of the fall of man, as given in the Bible, being declared untrue, the necessity for the sacrifice of Christ is also denied, and thus the entire Gospel is cast aside as a myth.

5. THE POWER IS NATURALLY IN YOU

The Bible teaches that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes;⁷⁸ but evolution teaches that it itself is the power of nature unto salvation of every one, whether he believes or not.

6. FOLLOW YOUR INCLINATIONS

It virtually teaches that whatever is, is right. Evolution being the law of nature, and all the good that can ever be developed in man, being in him all the time, it follows, as Spiritualists tell us, that all a man has to do is to follow the inclinations of his own heart. But...

Mark 7

²¹ Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

²² Thefts, covetousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness;

²³ All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Therefore the man who with all his heart believes in the theory of evolution will act out all the evil that Satan can suggest to him. Surely,

Proverbs 28

²⁶ He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's Answer to Man's Foolish Boasting

In spite of the contradictions in the theory of evolution, and the acknowledgment that it is at best only a vision, we are gravely told that...

Evolution is seen to be little more than the story of creation, as told by those who know it best.

⁷⁸ *Romans* 1:16.

That is either to deny the inspiration of the Bible, or else to claim that modern “scientists” know more about the story of creation than the Lord himself! To all this wise folly the words of the Lord, as recorded in *Job*, chapters 38, 39, and 40, are strikingly applicable:

Job 38

- ² Who is this that darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
- ³ Gird up now your loins like a man;
For I will demand of you, and you declare unto me,
- ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare if you have understanding.
- ⁵ Who determined the measures thereof, if you know?
Or who stretched the line upon it?
- ⁶ Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened
Or who laid the cornerstone thereof;
- ⁷ When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
- ⁸ Or who shut up the sea with doors,
When it broke forth as if it had issued out of the womb;
- ⁹ When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddling hand for it,
- ¹⁰ And prescribed for it my decree,
And set bars and doors,
- ¹¹ And said, Hitherto shall you come, but no further;
And here shall your proud waves be stayed?
- ¹² Have you commanded the morning since the days began,
And caused the day-spring to know its place
- ¹³ That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
- ¹⁷ Have the gates of death been revealed unto you?
Or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?
- ¹⁸ Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Declare, if you know it all.
- ¹⁹ Where is the way to the dwelling of light,
And as for the darkness, where is the place thereof;
- ²⁰ That you should take it to the bound thereof,
And that you should discern the paths to the house thereof?

- ²¹ Doubtless, you know, for you were then born,
And the number of your days is great!
- ³¹ Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
- ³² Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season?
Can you then guide the bear with her
- ³³ Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?
Can you establish the dominion thereof in the earth?
- ³⁴ Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
That abundance of waters may cover you?
- ³⁵ Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go,
And say unto you, Here we are?
- ³⁶ Who has put wisdom in the inward parts?
Or who has given understanding to the mind?
- ³⁷ Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven,
- ³⁸ When the dust runs into a mass,
And the clouds cleave fast together?

Job 39

- ¹⁹ Have you given the horse his might?
Have you clothed his neck with the quivering mane?
- ²⁶ Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,
And stretch her wings toward the south?
- ²⁷ Does the eagle mount up at your command,
And make her nest on high?

Job 40

- ⁷ Gird up your loins now like a man
I will demand of you and declare then unto me,
- ⁸ Will you even disannul my judgment?
Will you condemn me, that you may be justified?
- ⁹ Or have you an arm like God?
And can you thunder with a voice like Him?
- ¹⁰ Deck yourself now with excellency and dignity;
And array yourself with honor and majesty.
- ¹¹ Pour forth the overflowings of your anger:
And look upon every one that is proud, and abase him.
- ¹² Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low;
And tread down the wicked where they stand.

¹³ Hide them in the dust together;
Bind their faces in the hidden place.
¹⁴ Then will I confess of you
That your own right hand can save you.



11. One Book

Present Truth, July 6, 1893

A GREAT many people who would be shocked at the suggestion that they are infidels, imagine that faith is entirely consistent with a disbelief of many of the records of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. They think that they believe the Gospel, yet they make no scruple of pulling the Old Testament record of that Gospel to pieces. There are many portions of the Bible that they are very doubtful about; and as for the story of Jonah, and the account of the flood, they can scarcely have patience with anyone who professes to believe them. The Bible account of the creation of the earth, they regard as at the best only a beautiful fable.

Can one believe the Gospel, and disbelieve the Old Testament? Let us see. The Apostle Peter speaks about the salvation of our souls, and says,

1 Peter 1

¹⁰ Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

¹¹ 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.

¹² Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by these which have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Read the above text carefully, and you will see that it states that the prophets of old ministered the very same things that are announced by those who preach the Gospel. Then the prophets must have written the Gospel. When Peter was preaching Christ in the house of Cornelius, he said,

Acts 10

⁴³ To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

And the Apostle Paul said,

Acts 26 [RV]

²² Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come:

²³ How that Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

Therefore whoever says that the Old Testament does not contain the Gospel, says that the Apostle Paul did not preach the Gospel.

Suppose the position be taken that the story of creation, and of the fall of man, is only a fable. If that were so, then there would be no Gospel at all. For if there were no fall of man, there need be no redemption. So that if the account of the fall were imaginary, then we have the entire Gospel built on a fable. And besides, if the story of creation and the fall of man be a fable, how can we know that the whole Bible is not the same? We must either accept the whole Bible, or reject it all. We cannot pull it into pieces.

Take the account of the prophet Jonah. Many people would feel almost insulted if it were intimated that they were so simple as to believe it. They say that it never really happened that the great fish never swallowed Jonah, and that it would have been impossible for him to live three days in its belly. But Christ said,

Matthew 12

⁴⁰ As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Now if Jonah was never in the whale's belly, and could not have been, then we have the Saviour likening His death and resurrection to an impossibility. Therefore to deny the story of Jonah, is to deny the foundation of the Gospel.

It will not do in this case to say as so many of the “higher critics” do, that the Saviour spoke of the things that were currently reported among the Jews, as illustrations, taking the people on their own grounds, without stopping to explain that those things were really fables. If the story were not true, the Lord knew it; yet He said that just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale so He should be in the heart of the earth. If the story of Jonah were not true, then we have Christ saying that He would not be in the heart of the earth at all. Is it not better to believe a thing that we cannot understand, than to throw away the entire Gospel? Who dare say that it is of no importance whether or not we believe all the records of the Old Testament?

The saddest part of this matter is that the people have not been led to this loose way of regarding the Bible by professed infidels, but by professed ministers of the Gospel. It is they who are responsible for the current of unbelief that is carrying so many away. Indeed, one can scarcely pick up a religious journal without seeing more or less about the controversy that is now going on over the Bible. There is a controversy, for there are many ministers who stand for the truth of the Bible; yet there are so many ministers of high standing and influence, who seem to be actuated by intense fear that the people will really believe too much of the Bible, that it is necessary to raise a voice of warning. We need not pass sentence of condemnation upon those ministers, but simply warn the people to beware of them as false teachers.

Lessons from the Flood

We have just seen a sermon on the flood, which instead of seeking to strengthen the faith of the weak, is almost wholly devoted to an attempt to prove that there never was any such thing. Here are some of the statements. We give them because doubts in regard to the flood are becoming quite common. The preacher says:

No student of science is able to believe that any such flood as that recorded in the early chapters of *Genesis* ever took place in the history of the human race.

We are not to take the account of the deluge for history infallibly inspired and rigidly accurate in all its details.

That view he tells us,

...is no longer held by persons of ordinary education.

How easy it is to brush aside a proposition with the statement that no one of ordinary education believes it. A false fear of being called ignorant is at the bottom of a large part of the infidelity of these days.

But what about the flood? May we throw it aside as a myth, and still hold fast our faith in the Gospel, and in the Bible in general? Let us see. Christ used the flood and its time as an illustration of the last days.

Luke 17

²⁶ As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

²⁷ They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

In the book of *Hebrews* we are informed who the “all” were who were destroyed by the flood.

Hebrews 11

⁷ By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear; prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It was the world that was condemned by the preaching of Noah, because they did not believe it; and it was the world that was destroyed by the flood. Christ in person, and also through His chosen apostle, bears witness to this.

Again the flood is put in the same list as the creation of the world, and the general judgment. The Apostle Peter says that they

who scoff at the promise of the coming of the Lord, are willingly ignorant of the fact that...

2 Peter 3

⁵ ...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

⁶ Whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished:

⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Whoever discounts the story of the flood, thereby discounts the story of creation, and also the promise of the coming of the Lord to judge the world. The same word that brought the flood upon the earth, created the earth, and will make it new again. The Scriptures, from Moses onward, testify of Christ, and they cannot be rejected without rejecting Christ.

Still further, if the story of the flood is a myth, then there is no comfort in the Gospel. It is upon that fact, and the things connected with it, that the Lord gives us assurance that He will not forget us. Speaking to Jerusalem which is above, and is the mother of us all, which is now desolate, mourning the absence of her children, God says,

Isaiah 54

⁹ For this is as the waters of Noah unto me, for as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you.

Her joy and glory will be the restoration of her children, by the salvation of the righteous; therefore the assurance that God will save His people is no greater than the assurance that there was a flood in the days of Noah.

⁹ ...as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with you.

But if there were no flood, then the Lord did not swear that the waters of the flood should no more go over the earth; and so in that case we have no assurance that He will remember to save His people. Again, we read the words of inspiration through the Apostle Peter:

2 Peter 2

⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

⁹ The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

If the Lord did that, He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations; but if He did not do that, what then? the only conclusion is that He does not know how to deliver the godly out of temptations. And so those who deny the story of the flood throw away all the consolations of the Gospel.

More might be said in the same line, but this is sufficient to show that no one can lightly deny any part of the Sacred Record. It all stands or falls together. No, that is not correct: it all *stands* together; it does not fall, notwithstanding the assaults of men.

Psalm 119

⁸⁹ For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

¹⁶⁰ Your word is true from the beginning; and every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever.

We have written this to call attention to what is involved in setting aside any portion of the Bible, and to enable the reader more clearly to see that...

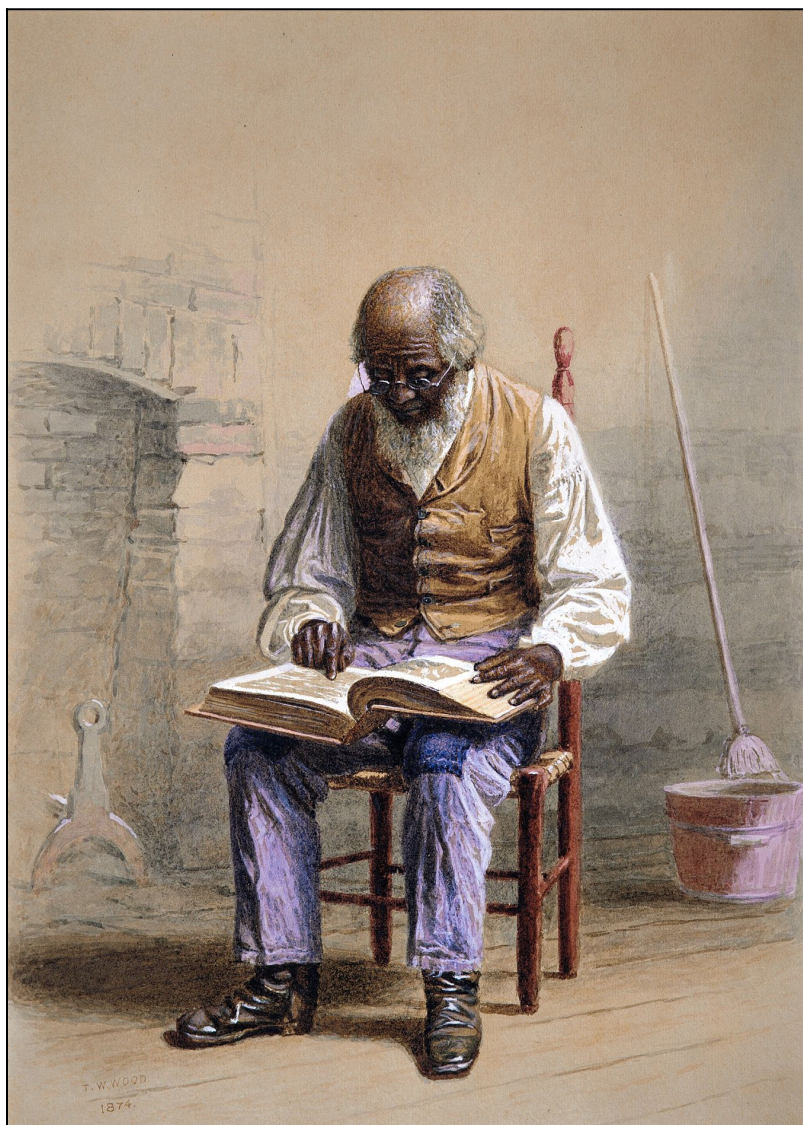
2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in right-

ousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It is all profitable, and all necessary.



12. One Word, One Spirit

Present Truth, July 13, 1893

HE WHO would derive any real food from the Bible must study it as the word of God, and not as the word of man, believing that...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There are many writers of the Bible, and only one Spirit. The various writings do not make many different books, but one complete, harmonious book. It is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable; he who believes it will be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. And as it is all profitable, He who doubts any part of it will be lacking in some essential. Indeed, since it is one book instead of many, he who disbelieves a part of it, throws discredit upon the whole, and thus cuts himself off from the profit to be derived from it.

13. The Deep Things of God

Present Truth, August 10, 1893

REPETITION is the secret of success. The artisan becomes expert with his tools by constantly handling them. He can execute that job of work so quickly and so neatly, because he has had so much practice. It is by constant drill that a body of soldiers become able to move as one man, without giving the matter any thought. So it is by repeatedly reviewing the things that he has studied, that the student becomes master of them. It is his perfect familiarity with first principles, gained by going over them again and again, that he is able at length to master other things very quickly, and often with no seeming effort. Constant application is the secret of success in anything.

So it is with the study of the Scriptures. One need not expect to become “mighty in the Scriptures,”⁷⁹ as Apollos was, without giving himself wholly to them, as Paul exhorted Timothy.⁸⁰ The trouble with many who desire to understand the Bible is that they are impatient of study. They wish at once to be as proficient as some other person who has devoted years of study to it. This they think they will gain by listening to the discourses and explanations of that other one. But familiarity with the Bible can come only by personal study. One may learn much by seeing another do a certain kind of work, but he may watch a skilled mechanic for months, and he will still be awkward when he first attempts to do the job himself. The exercise of one man will never give strength to another man; but the second man may be guided in his exercise by the experience of the first one. So one man’s study can never give understanding to another. The man who has studied much may guide another one in his study, but no amount of counsel or instruction to the beginner will ever take the place of earnest, diligent study for himself.

⁷⁹ Acts 18:24.

⁸⁰ 1 Timothy 4:15.

The truths of the Bible do not all lie on the surface. They must be searched for. The wise man said,

Proverbs 2

³ If you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

There are very few places where silver and gold and diamonds can be picked up on the surface of the ground. He who would have them must dig for them. This does not mean that everybody may not understand the Bible. The things of God are revealed unto babes. He who would receive the kingdom of God, must receive it as a little child. That which may be understood by children, can surely be understood by anybody.

Someone may say that he has not a great mind, and is not able to search out deep things. The Lord knows all about that, and He has provided for it.

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ As it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

¹⁰ But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Christ said also of the Spirit:

John 16

¹⁴ He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.

It is in Christ that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.⁸¹ Therefore in taking of His things and showing them to us, the Spirit is revealing to was the deep things of God. Now the Spirit is given freely and without measure to every one that

⁸¹ See *Colossians* 2:2-3.

wishes it,⁸² so that anyone may have revealed to him the deep things of God. God will speak to all who are willing to listen, and He is able to speak so that He may be understood by the most simple.

Psalm 119

⁷ The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.



⁸² *Luke 11:13.*

14. Translating the Letter

Present Truth, August 10, 1893

IF A dear friend of yours in India had sent you a letter containing his last wishes and a special message of love, would you not prize that letter very highly? There is no doubt but that you would read it very often, until you were able to tell all its contents without reference to the written page. And yet, although you might become so familiar with its contents, you would still frequently turn to the letter, and read it again and again.

Would it make any difference to you if you knew that the letter was not written with his own hand, but that it was dictated to an amanuensis?⁸³ The fact that it was from your friend would be the great thing; you would not mind if he had used the hand of another to transcribe the thoughts. And you would not need to depend on the signature in his own handwriting, to know that the letter was indeed from your friend. The tone and spirit of the letter, and the messages sent, which show more plainly than the signature, that it was from him. Somebody else might forge his signature, but nobody could counterfeit his sentiments and spirit, nor could the love that is breathed through the messages be counterfeited.

But suppose that the letter is written in Hindustani; what would you do then? You cannot read a word of that language, and how can you know that the letter is from your friend, and what it contains? Would you give the matter up, and say that you cannot be expected to know the contents of a letter written in a foreign language? Not by any means. You would straightway seek a man who is acquainted with both the English and the Hindustani, and get him to translate the letter for you. Then you could read it as readily as though it had been originally written in English. And you would be able to tell that it was from your friend, just the

⁸³ *Amanuensis*: a person employed to write or type what another person dictates, or to copy what has been written by another.

same as before. You would recognize his style of thought and expression, and would know that the messages of love or even of a business nature, could come from no stranger. The fact that the letter was written in Hindustani would not make a particle of difference. You could become as well acquainted with it as though it had been written in English.

Moreover there could not now be the charge that in your love for the message of your friend you were guilty of making a fetish of the letter. For the letter that you now carry in your pocket, and which you so frequently open and read, is not the original copy that came from India, but the translation, if you carried the original copy which you cannot read, around with you, bending over it again and again, then there might be some color for the charge of fetishism; but the fact that the copy which you carry and consult is not the one that came from your friend, and which his hands touched, shows that it is the *message* that you love and reverence, and not the paper and the letters. You would very naturally seek to preserve the original letter, but if it should be lost, you would have none the less doubt about the genuineness of the message.

But there might still be one more difficulty in your mind. What if the man who translated the letter for you did not do the work properly? Perhaps he was not competent, or perhaps he willfully inserted something or changed something, to serve some private ends. What will you do now? Why, you will get somebody else to translate the letter. Still, although you have only the one translation, and are not sure that it is a correct rendering, you do not have any doubt as to its having come from your friend, for it bears the impress of his own personality. You cannot be deceived in that, but you are in doubt as to certain parts. You want to be sure that you have the exact message of your friend.

So you get another man to translate the letter, and then another, and still another. If you think that the first man might have had such relations to the business matters referred to in the letter

that he, perhaps unconsciously, gave the translation the color of his own mind, instead of that of your friend, then you seek others who are differently related to the matter, so that if there has been any mistake the translations may correct each other.

Now you take all these different translations, and compare them. What do you expect to find? Do you expect and demand that all the translations shall be identically alike? If they are not, do you throw them away, and say that you cannot know anything about it? Not by any means. You will expect that there will be some slight differences. Indeed, if there are not, but if every translation is word for word and letter for letter the same, you will be in doubt more than before, for you will think that the translators have conspired to cheat you.

No; you do not expect to find any two of them exactly alike. If you have a dozen translations, you will find that certain expressions are the same in every one. Then you will find that certain other points are the same in three or four copies, and that they differ in the rest. And you will find that the copies that were exactly the same on these points are different on others, and that those that differed on the first are the same on the others.

Another thing that you will not fail to notice, is that you understand the letter a great deal better, with the different translations, than you did with only one. You are also sure that there is no serious error in any of them. If there should be a serious error in one, you would detect it by the fact that all the others, while not identical on that point, are uniform in thought, and all differ from the one. You will also find that the differences in the translations are not necessarily errors, but that the more translations you have, all presenting those slight differences, the clearer the thought is to you. One presents a phase of thought that is not fully expressed in another, and you need them all in order to get the fullest conception of the matter. And so after all, you have as good an idea of the matter contained in the original letter, as you would have if you were able to read the Hindustani.

Suppose, still further, that the letter was of such a general nature that it interests many people, and that they each wish to have a copy of it. Some make their own copies, and others hire copies made. These copies are scattered over the country, but in process of time the original letter is lost. Now someone suggests that these copies are full of errors, and that since no one now living has the original letter you cannot know anything about the correctness of what you have. Now what can you do? Well, in the first place, you can be as sure that what you have is a letter from your friend as you could be in the case first supposed; for you recognize his thoughts. You know that the subject is one on which he alone would or could write. So that you know that the letter is from him, although for a moment you are thrown into doubt as to the correctness of the copy that you have.

You feel that you cannot afford to be in doubt in this matter. The letter is too important for that. So you set to work to collect all the copies that can be obtained. Then you compare them, just as you did the translations. What do you find? You possibly find that there are no two of them exactly alike, yet the most of them differ very slightly. In some you will find a word omitted here and there, for even the most careful copyist is liable to make mistakes. Let some one copy a page or a column of this paper, and he will see how easy it is to omit a word in copying.

But although a certain word is omitted in one copy, the fact that it is found in all the rest shows that it was in the original letter. Then in one copy you find several words omitted. On this point you search diligently, and you find that the words are in all the others. Looking carefully, you observe that in the copies which have the words, the last word before them is the same as the last word that is omitted in the one copy. What does this show you? Simply this, that in the original letter there were two lines that both ended with the same word, and that one of the copyists, after writing the first line, looked up and saw at the end of the next line the same word that he had just written; and suppose that it was the line that he had just copied, and so he skipped that line.

And so you go through, and although you find little differences all through, the mistake that is made in any one is corrected by the others, so that you have no difficulty in learning the thought of the letter. And now mark this point: You are more sure of your letter, because of these many copies, even though there are little differences in them, than you would be if you had only one copy, or if all the copies were exactly alike. And why? Because in that case you would have nothing to show that there had been no forgery, whereas the slight differences proved to you that there has been no collusion, but that all the copyists have worked independently. And the most skeptical person must admit that in the beginning there must have been one copy from which all these came, either directly or indirectly.

The reader does not need to be told that all this is to illustrate some of the facts concerning our Bible. Sometimes the people are troubled over the fact that there are many copies and versions of the Bible, whereas they ought to be more confident of the genuineness of the Bible on that account. And if this article shall have the effect of removing any honest doubts, even though it be from the mind of but one person, it will be a cause of great rejoicing.

15. An Unanswerable Argument

Present Truth, August 17, 1893

THIS *Anti-Infidel* publishes the following little story, which ought to be read and remembered by all who profess to be Christians:

In one of the towns in Massachusetts there was a man who took in an infidel paper, and set himself up as an avowed infidel. He argued with, and, as he thought, refuted all the Christians in the place. But there was one old professor in the village who would not debate with him. He spoke of the unspeakable love of Christ; of the preciousness of a good hope; of the comfort it afforded him. His conduct worried his skeptical neighbor. For all the rest he cared not a whit; but that old man—he talked about Him most of the time—somehow harrowed up his mind so that he could not rest. And so great was the trouble this old man caused him that it led him to reflect, repent, and believe on Christ. When he came into Conference to relate his experience, anterior to uniting with the church, he pointed to the hoary-headed member, and exclaimed, “the life of that man slew me.”

No infidel was ever converted by arguing. Though you answer the objections of a skeptic a thousand times, he will be ready with them the thousand and first time as fresh as ever. But the argument which will have the effect, and which is the only one for the Christian to use, is the manifestation of the life of Christ.

Matthew 5

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Then when they are attracted by the life, so that they wish to learn instead of to fight, you can...

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ ...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

16. Faith and Credulity

Present Truth, August 24, 1893

IT HAS been remarked that the present is an age of unbelief and also of wonderful credulity. The statement is true, and there is nothing strange about it either. Unbelief is not absence of all belief, but only of a certain kind of belief. It implies a belief opposite in nature to that which is absent. The man who calls himself an agnostic, only seeks to hide under that term a belief which is just as real as anyone's, but which, generally, he has not the courage to avow and maintain.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy, speaks of this age of unbelief, saying that men...

2 Timothy 4

⁴ ...shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The result could not be otherwise, for when people turn away from the truth there is nothing left for them to believe but error, and they grow credulous as a natural result. There is nothing in the world more credible than the statements of God's Word. They who refuse this and try to construct a material and a spiritual world upon some hypotheses of their own, may consider themselves wise, but in reality they are the most credulous persons in existence.

17. A Contrast

Present Truth, August 24, 1893

Genesis 1

¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and earth.

² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

³ And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

Psalms 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.

THIS is plain and definite; a child can understand it. Now listen to the opening words of a recent book entitled, *Reveries of World History, from Earth's Nebulous Origin to its Final Ruin*, and note the contrast:

In the beginning, obedient to the word of Eternal Law, the chaos of Earth circled in the vastness. Formless and void in the profundity, out of formlessness, a form evolved.

Diffused in vapor, condensing by the force of gravity, and absorbing gaseous matter from its nebulous surroundings, the World wandered through limitless space, ordered by the natural but mysterious government of inexorable Law, etc, etc.

That is truly a “nebulous” description. After reading the two accounts, who can doubt that...

1 Corinthians 1

²⁵ ...the foolishness of God is wiser than men?

Surely all who have not become so “vain in their imaginations”⁸⁴ that their foolish minds are utterly darkened, must agree with the *Chronicle*, that “the old is better.”

⁸⁴ Romans 1:21.

18. Defending the Word of God

Present Truth, October 5, 1893

IT IS NOT an uncommon thing at the present time to see men undertake the task of defending the word of God. They do so doubtless, with the best of intentions, but they have a zeal which is not according to knowledge. They do not know the nature of that word and the purpose for which it was given.

The word of God is always capable of defending itself. More than this: It is not on the defensive, but is always aggressive. It is a weapon; it is nothing less than...

Ephesians 6

¹⁷ ...the sword of the Spirit.

Jeremiah 23

²⁹ Is not my word like as a fire? says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

And Paul in his letter to the *Hebrews* testifies that it...

Hebrews 4

¹² ...is quick [living] and powerful, 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.

However evident, then, that the word of God does not need to be defended by the efforts of man. Rather is it a weapon of defense to man; for he is admonished to take this sword of the Spirit with him, as he goes out to engage in the Christian warfare. Nothing can prevail against the Word, but the Word can and will prevail against all things. Thus it becomes an invaluable weapon to finite man, who is compelled to meet those that are stronger than himself.

All the efforts that man can make in defense of the Word God are utterly useless. The Word has infinitely more power than man has, for it has the power of God. It is a weapon for the propaga-

tion of truth. If truth is to be vindicated, the best method is not by arguments made up from human reason, but by speaking forth the living word, fresh from the pages of inspiration. Human reasoning, debating, speculation, and philosophy are the weapons employed (through his agents) by the devil; and he knows better how to use them than any man. The armory of God contains no such weapons, and the cause of truth can never be vindicated by their use. Our weapon is the word of God. By it we can overthrow all these, and successfully...

Jude

³ ...contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Error cannot stand before the word of God. Though it will still be clung to by such as have chosen to make themselves its champions, because of their corrupt desires, it cannot keep its place in the honest heart before the sword of the Spirit. When argument and human reasoning cease to be substituted for the Word in the conflict with error, the cause of truth will make much faster progress.

19. Where Is the Truth?

Present Truth, October 5, 1893

TO WHAT source among men can we look with confidence to find religious truth? Is it with the masses of mankind? Is it with a church that is the largest in numbers and greatest in wealth and influence? Is worldly popularity and prosperity anywhere a sign of its presence? These are questions upon which very much depends, and which multitudes have answered unwisely, to the ruin of their souls. The following words from a sermon by the Rev. F. J. Hamilton are instructive upon this theme:

There are times, and the present is such a time, when the Christian warrior must make a special stand, and feel more keenly the pressure of the strife. Never should he, for a moment, shrink from loyalty to the truth through fear of man, never should he quail before the power of the world; never should he imagine that to please man's carnal fancies is the way to win their soul; never must he be deluded by the notion that the truth is with the multitude.

Was the truth with the eight hundred and fifty prophets of idolatry, headed by royalty, applauded by the people, clad in their vestments, and leaping on their altars; or with Elijah, as he stood alone before his dripping sacrifice, strong only in his God? Let the fire from heaven testify, and the shout of the unwilling crowd declare it. Where was the truth? With the seven thousand obscure believers, or with the multitudes that kissed the images? Let all the after history proclaim it, and the witness of the Spirit confirm it.

Where is the truth now? With those who multiply ceremonies, bring back unlawful rites, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men; with those who spin out the web of some skeptical argument, and assail the integrity and inspiration of the Scriptures by which they shall be judged; or with those who believe in Christ Jesus as their all-sufficient and only Saviour, who look for the sanctification of the Spirit, and simply trust the Divine word? We confidently appeal from the flabby sentiment of a self-seeking age to the unerring verdict of eternity!

Where, it might also have been said, was the truth in the days of Noah, when only eight souls and all the world believed his message and were saved from the flood? Where was it in the days of Abraham, when he was called to separate himself from his father's house and become a stranger in the earth? Where was it in the days of Christ and His little handful of disciples, scorned and persecuted by the sanctimonious Jews? Where was it in the days of Martin Luther, when he began his work amidst the opposition of popes and prelates, emperors and kings? And where is it to-day? Has the tide at length turned, so that truth is not to be found on the side of the majority? or is it still fighting the battle with error under similar circumstances to those which have prevailed in ages past?

Is it not necessary that these queries should be made and answered in uncertainty. There is one certain source of truth, accessible to all, and upon which all may rely with absolute certainty. It is the word of God.

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth, [said Jesus]: your word is truth.

This is the source which supplied Abraham, Noah, Elijah, the apostles, Luther, and all others in all ages who maintained the cause of truth against the opposition of the multitude; and it is the only reliable source in the world today. Let us come to it and take it as such, notwithstanding the opposition of men. Let us say with the apostle,

Romans 3

⁴ Let God be true, but every man a liar.

20. The Infallible Word

Present Truth, November 2, 1893

THE question of infallibility is one that is receiving a great deal of attention at the present time. As a matter of fact, everybody believes that there is such a thing as infallibility somewhere; the question to be decided, is, Where is it? Many will deny that there is any such thing as infallibility, but it will be found that those who the most loudly deny its existence, are the ones who most complacently trust in themselves, and think that their own reason is infallible.

Religion Requires Infallibility

Infallibility is one of the great essentials of religion. In a matter concerning our eternal destiny we cannot afford to rest on uncertainties. We must *know*. Now the Gospel provides a certainty. We are told that we may “rest in the Lord,”⁸⁵ and are exhorted to know the truth for ourselves.

John 8

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2 Timothy 2

¹⁵ Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Men Are Not Infallible

But the church is not infallible, for it is composed of men, and there is nothing infallible in any man on earth.

Proverbs 28

²⁶ He that trusts in his own heart is a fool,

—because...

Jeremiah 17

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

⁸⁵ *Psalm 37:7.*

This is true of the human heart without exception. It is just as true of the Pope of Rome as it is of the savages in Africa.

Here is something that the Bible says about trusting in human power and wisdom:

Psalm 146

³ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

⁴ His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Jeremiah 17

⁵ Thus says the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.

⁶ For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good comes; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

This is not an arbitrary decree, but the statement of a natural consequence. Man is as the grass. At his best state he is...

Psalm 39

⁵ ...altogether vanity.

He who puts his trust in man, no matter who the man may be, is trusting in nothing; and He who trusts in nothing, must come to nothing.

Look now at the other side:

Jeremiah 17

⁷ Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

⁸ For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Psalm 146

⁵ Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God:

⁶ Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.

The One who made the heavens and the earth is infallible, for we read,

Hebrews 1

¹⁰ You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands:

¹¹ They shall perish; but You remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment;

¹² And as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and your years shall not fail.

Ephesians 1

¹¹ [He] works all things after the counsel of His own will.

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁴ Whatsoever God does, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God does it, that men should fear before Him.

Controversy Over the Bible

There is, however, no direct controversy about the infallibility of God. Few openly deny it, although one really denies it when he trusts in himself instead of in God. But the controversy in these days is over the Bible. The discussion is not between avowed infidels and Christians, but among those who profess to be Christians. There was a time when the Bible was held to be the word of God by all who professed to be Christians; but in these days the infidel's occupation is gone, since a portion of the church is acting his part.

The above is strong language, but it is true. At the recent meeting of the Congregational Union, in London, the minister read a paper in which the position was taken that,

A man who affirmed the absolute inerrancy of the Bible laid himself open to one or other of the three following charges: Either that:

1. He did not know the facts with which he professed to deal; or

2. He was unable, owing to the influence of some kind of intellectual *strabismus* [a cross-eyed condition], to see their true bearing and the conclusion to which they inevitably pointed; or
3. He had not the manliness and courage to admit the unwelcome truth which he perceived.

Another minister, of another denomination, recently pleaded most pathetically with a congregation, not to lead souls to ruin by teaching them that the Bible is absolutely true. Said he, to the few souls who still hold that the Bible is true, and who are simple-minded enough to expect others to believe it:

You are safe—safe not because you believe in an absolutely inerrant Bible,—I hope you have a better foundation than that,—you are safe because you believe in an inerrant Saviour.

From the report of another sermon, we take the following:

In the course of his argument, the preacher said that to claim infallibility for the Bible was to contend for more than itself claimed. Nor was infallibility to be found in the Church; and no man living within sound of a railway whistle claimed infallibility for a church creed. Infallibility could not be in a book, but must be in a person who was sinless. Therefore Jesus Christ the sinless One was the only possible seat of infallibility.

In these references no names have been used, because our object is not to call any man in question, but simply to give a few specimens of a sentiment that is becoming alarmingly prevalent. Some may think that the last two quotations are not very bad, since, although they do set the Bible aside very summarily, they uphold the infallibility of Christ. But this is just what, as a matter of fact, *they do not do*. Speaking of this discussion about the Bible, a religious journal recently said:

We greatly fear that some of those who are trying to break up what they call “book worship,” and thereby magnify the Christ will soon practically get rid of Him also.

That is just what they have already done, as we shall show; and that is why we raise our voice in earnest protest and warning.

The Claim of the Bible

It is said that the Bible does not claim to be infallible. Let us see. It *does* claim to be the word of God, spoken through men. Read the prophecies of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the rest, and on almost every page you find the words,

“Thus says the Lord;”

“The word of the Lord that came...”

“The word which the Lord spoke.”

To Jeremiah the Lord said,

Jeremiah 1

⁹ Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

We read,

Ezekiel 1

³ The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest,

—and the Lord said to him,

Ezekiel 2

⁷ You shall to speak with my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

And thus it is throughout the book. It claims to be the word of God; if it could be shown that it is not what it claims to be, then the whole thing would be a monstrous forgery, and unworthy of the slightest regard.

But let us read further as to what the Bible claims for itself. Take the following texts:

Hebrews 1

¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²⁰ No prophecy of Scripture is a private interpretation.

²¹ For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Acts 3

²⁰ And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

1 Thessalonians 2

¹³ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

1 Corinthians 14

³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of God.

Many more texts might be added, but these are sufficient. They show plainly that the Bible claims to be the word of God. It is not that it *contains* the word of God, but it *is* the word of God. In the words of the Bible, the Holy Spirit testifies.

Hebrews 10

¹⁵ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before,

¹⁶ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.

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.

It was the Spirit of Christ that was speaking through the prophets. This is what the Bible claims, and there are many who *know* of a surety that it is true. They are not Bible critics, however, but Bible believers.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Psalms 25

¹⁴ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

God and His Word Are Infallible

From the texts that have been quoted it is evident that whoever brings a charge against the Bible is bringing a charge against God. To say that the Bible is fallible, is to say that God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are fallible. For if the word of God be not infallible, then God is not infallible. But God is infallible, and so is His word.

Psalms 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those who trust in Him.

Psalms 12

⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Psalms 119

⁸⁹ Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

Jesus said to the Jews,

John 5

⁴⁶ Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not His writings, how shall you believe my words?

And so it is that in rejecting the Bible, either as a whole or in part, men not only are in danger of rejecting Christ, but are actually rejecting Him. We write for the purpose of warning honest souls who may be confused by the show of learning made by Bible critics. Let them remember that...

Job 28

²⁸ ...the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

Psalms 111

¹⁰ A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

When people who decry the Bible profess to believe in an infallible Christ, it is enough to ask them how they can know anything about Him, if it is not from His word, which they treat so lightly.

The Opinions and Interpretations of Men

But some will say,

“Even though we admit the Bible to be infallible, every man’s opinion and interpretation thereof is not infallible.”

Very true. We go further, and say that no man’s opinion or interpretation of the Bible is infallible. Further still, we will say that there is not a man on earth, whose opinion or interpretation of the Bible is worth any more than the paper on which it is written. It is not what men think about the Lord but what the Lord thinks about men, that we are concerned with.

*The Bible is not to be interpreted,
but read, studied, and believed.*

The most learned man in the Scriptures can do no more than to lead others to the place whence he derived his knowledge and let them drink from the same fountain for themselves.

Truth Revealed to Babes

There are in the Bible many...

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁰ ...deep things,

—and...

2 Peter 3

¹⁶ ...things hard to be understood.

But,

God is His own interpreter.

And He will make it plain.⁸⁶

He gives the Holy Spirit freely to everyone who will receive it, as a Guide into all truth.

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

The Spirit makes known to us the things that are freely given to us of God,

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁰ For the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God.

Learning is not to be despised, but rather desired; but the humblest person who truly fears God, may understand the Bible far better than the most learned Doctor who trusts in his own wisdom. The truth of God is hidden from the wise and prudent,—wise in their own wisdom,—and is revealed unto babes, who are willing to receive the wisdom that comes from God.

⁸⁶ William Cowper, Hymn: *God Moves in a Mysterious Way* (1773).

Depend upon it that souls will never be saved by preaching which throws the least discredit upon the Bible. The man who feels constrained to apologize for the Bible, may have crowds to listen to his smooth eloquence, but he will not have them crying out,

Acts 16

³⁰ What must I do to be saved?

The men through whom God worked in the past, were men who believed the Bible without reserve. There were things that they did not understand, but instead of parading their ignorance as wisdom, they took it to the Lord, and waited for Him to show them wisdom. And God is as able and willing to do mighty things through human agency today as He ever was. He says,

Isaiah 66

² To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.

When we see the humble acceptance of the word of God, we shall see the demonstration of the statement that it works effectually in all that believe.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

21. A Specimen Criticism

Present Truth, November 16, 1893

IN THEIR haste to rush to the front to assure the people that the Bible is not all true, but only such portions as chance to accord with their ideas, many ministers of the day are fairly stumbling over one another. Not all of the ministers, by any means, but a rapidly increasing number of them. There was a time when the distinguishing feature of Protestantism was that it stood for the Bible, in opposition to Roman Catholicism; but now those who are foremost in attacking the old Book, and in seeking to shake the faith of the people in it, are professed Protestants. They seem to understand the injunction, "Preach the word,"⁸⁸ if they ever think of it, as though it read,

"Criticize the word."

This is not written in any carping spirit, but with sorrow, and exceeding great alarm.

Psalm 11

³ If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

In their most persistent and aggressive teaching that the Bible is not all true, these men are undermining the very foundations of the Gospel. Not that the Gospel, which is the power of God, can ever actually be destroyed, for the Lord is still in His holy temple; but so far as many people are concerned, it will be the same as though it were destroyed. We write solely for the purpose of saving some, if possible, from being led astray by the array of titles and the show of learning that are paraded by those who thus oppose the Bible.

As a specimen of the wickedness, to say nothing of the shallowness, of this onslaught upon the Bible, we give the following which appeared in one of the leading religious journals, in an article from a man who writes "Rev." before, and "D.D." after, his

⁸⁸ 2 Timothy 4:2.

name. He is a man whose influence, through his position and writings, is extensive. It is not necessary to give names, as we are dealing with a principle, and not with men. Here is the passage:

In *Acts* 7:4, Stephen says that Abraham came to Canaan “after his father was dead.” But comparing *Genesis* 11:26, 32; 12:4, we learn that Terah lived many years after Abraham left Haran. The error is easily accounted for by the mention of Terah’s death before the migration of Abraham. It does not affect either the spiritual teachings of the story of Abraham or the great facts underlying that teaching. But it is inconsistent with Mr. Urquhart’s assertion, [namely, that the Bible does not contain errors.]

This case is especially interesting because Stephen could claim the special inspiration promised to those brought before judges: “It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you.” No inspiration richer than this was promised to or predicated of the sacred writers. And as we read Stephen’s heroic defense we feel how abundantly the promise was fulfilled in him. Yet it did not save him from two clear discrepancies, discrepancies, however, which in no wise weaken his defense.

Let us read all the texts that are referred to in the above. And reading the following verses, remember that “Charran” and “Haran” are the same. The Hebrew letter beginning the word is a guttural, very difficult of pronunciation and of representation in English. In this case, as in the case of many other proper names, the common version of the New Testament gives a different spelling from the Old. Now for the texts:

Acts 7

² The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

³ And said unto him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you.

⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell.

Genesis 11

²⁶ And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

³¹ And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

³² And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

Genesis 12

¹ Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you:

⁴ So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

The trouble with the critic is this: He reads *Genesis* 11:26 as though it stated that Terah was just seventy years old when Abram was born, and then putting that with the statement that Terah died in Haran, at the age of two hundred and five, and that Abram left Haran when he was seventy-five years of age, he concludes that Terah was only one hundred and forty-five years old when Abram left Haran, and that therefore Abram left Haran sixty years before his father died, instead of after his death, as stated by Stephen. This is one side of the case, the side of unbelief, or of the "Higher Criticism."

All the texts referred to are simple and harmonious, and very easy to be understood, provided we accept the Bible as true. One who believes the Bible will have no trouble with the statements. It is the one who disbelieves the Bible, who cannot understand them. In this we shall see a demonstration of the fact that unbelief is not caused by the difficulties in the Bible, but that the greatest difficulties are caused by unbelief.

For example, our critic says that Stephen's statement cannot be correct because it disagrees with the account in *Genesis*. With just as much reason he might say that the record in *Genesis* cannot be true, because it is not in harmony with the statement by Stephen. But if either of these assumptions be true,—that is, if it be so that one or the other of the statements is not true,—how may we know that the other is correct? And if it could be proved that part of what Stephen said is not true, what confidence can we have in anything that he said? And, further, if what Stephen said when he was so filled with the Holy Spirit that his face was transfigured, and he could look directly into heaven, is in any degree doubtful, what confidence can be placed in any part of that which...

2 Peter 1

²¹ Holy men spoke from God, moved by the Holy Ghost.

Thus we see that this is not simply a trifling question as to when a certain man died, but is an exceedingly grave one, involving the truthfulness or falsity of the entire Bible.

Now we see how easily the whole thing straightens out when we approach it in a spirit of belief, accepting the whole Bible as the living word of the living God. Moses writes that Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died, and that Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. But Stephen tells us that Abram did not leave Haran until his father was dead. Accepting both statements as the simple truth, we have a very simple problem to solve, namely, If Terah died at the age of two hundred and five, and Abram his son left Haran immediately afterward, at the age of seventy-five, how old was Terah when Abram was born? Subtracting seventy-five, we have the answer,—one hundred and thirty.

But what about the statement that...

Genesis 11

²⁶ Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran?

Let us first look at a similar statement:

Genesis 5

³² And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The careless or unbelieving reader would conclude that the three sons of Noah were all born at once. But on reading *Genesis* 10:21 we find that Japheth was the eldest of the three. Two years after the flood Shem was one hundred years old,⁸⁹ and as the flood lasted nearly a year, he must have been ninety-seven at its beginning. But Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came.⁹⁰ Therefore he was five hundred and three years old when Shem was born. The text in *Genesis* 5:32 therefore does not mean that all three of Noah's sons were born at the same time, but that he was five hundred years old before the first one was born. So with Terah; he was seventy years old when the first of his sons was born. Abram, though not the eldest, is always named first, because he was the most prominent, as in the case of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The case is simple and easy, if one believes the Bible; it becomes difficult only when one approaches it with a spirit of doubt, and the fear, if not the settled belief, that the Bible is not all true.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.⁹¹

The trouble is that men will not allow God a chance to speak, or will not believe Him when He does.

We have called this a sample criticism. It surely exhibits in a marked manner the Spirit of the new criticism, and that is what we wish to emphasize. Many of the criticisms cannot be disposed

⁸⁹ *Genesis* 11:10.

⁹⁰ *Genesis* 7:6.

⁹¹ William Cowper, Hymn: *God Moves in a Mysterious Way* (1773).

of so easily as this one, but no one need be troubled over that. The question is,

“Shall we believe man in preference to God?”

We see that in their criticism of the Bible, men do not hesitate to impeach the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Stephen was “full of the Holy Ghost,”⁹² and the Doctor of Divinity from whom we have quoted, allows that Christ’s assurance,

Matthew 10

²⁰ It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you,

—was fulfilled in a special manner in his case; yet in the face of that he does not hesitate to charge Stephen with making a mistake. But to charge Stephen with making a mistake under such circumstances, is to charge the Holy Spirit with error. To such fearful lengths does the spirit of criticism and unbelief lead men. There are honest souls who might be confounded by the questions which these critics may propound, who we are sure will refuse to listen to them when they are reminded how dishonoring to God such criticism is. There are many who yet reverence God, and honor His word, notwithstanding the words of the Lord are fulfilled:

Jeremiah 2

¹² Be astonished, O you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be very desolate, says the Lord.

¹³ For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

⁹² Acts 6:5.

22. Contending with Truth

Present Truth, November 23, 1893

WHEN the minions of Rome came one day to the home of the reformer Wycliffe, who was then prostrated upon what was supposed to be his death-bed, and looked upon him with exaltation over the prospect of his early decease, the old man raised himself upon his bed and confronting his enemies, exclaimed,

“With whom do you think you are contending? with a poor, feeble, worn-out man, tottering upon the brink of the grave? No; but with truth; truth, which is mightier than you, and will one day will vanquish you!”

In these words the Reformer stated a principle that has been lost sight of by the world at large, but is nonetheless true for failing to obtain popular recognition. Truth is mightier than all its foes. When men fight against Christianity, they are not contending with men, but with principles; and their efforts are entirely useless against those. They can imprison a man; they can burn him at the stake; but they cannot imprison or burn a principle of truth. The men who advocate them die, but the principles live on. The Reformers died; but the Reformation continued on, in spite of the utmost efforts of all its foes, and is moving majestically forward today, clothed in an ever-brightening panoply of truth, to a near and glorious triumph.

The reason is that it has in it the power of the word of God, which is the power of omnipotence. If we stand in the way of this truth, our efforts will avail nothing, and we ourselves shall be overwhelmed beneath it;⁹³ but it comes to us not for that purpose, but that we may take refuge upon it. The word of God cannot be shaken. Jesus said,

⁹³ *Matthew* 21:44.

Matthew 7

²⁴ Whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

Here is offered to every one a sure foundation. You may take your stand now upon the truth, upon the sayings of Jesus Christ, and know that you stand upon that which is immovable. This is the move which wisdom calls you to make. No matter what your circumstances may be, no matter what difficulties may rise up against you, they cannot shake you if your feet are planted upon the foundation of God's word. The truth will triumph, and those who rest upon it will triumph with it. Will you build upon the rock, or upon the sand?



23. I Don't Believe

Present Truth, November 23, 1893

SOME men are very much given to telling what they don't believe. Especially is this so with regard to the statements of Scripture. It is fashionable, even in church circles, to doubt some portions of the word of God, and this tendency of the age is constantly becoming more marked. Its effect upon youthful minds is most disastrous. Many a young man today is resting in spiritual apathy, refusing to identify himself with the followers of Christ, because of certain things pertaining to Christianity, or which he fancies pertain to it, which he does not understand, and does not believe to be true. When he thinks of Christianity it is only to think of these doubts. He views it only from a negative side. When these doubts are all cleared away, he will (as he thinks) embrace it. He is patiently waiting for them to be cleared up; but until they are gone he feels justified in remaining where he is.

A course so foolish as this would hardly be taken in anything outside of the realm of our obligations to God. The very worst foundation in the world to stand on is that of doubt. There is no virtue in doubt; it imparts no wisdom, no strength. No man could accomplish anything in any line of physical or mental achievement, working on a basis of what he did not believe. No; it is *faith* that gives power; it is *belief* from which a man draws inspiration for the task before him. It is *conviction* that fills him with energy and nerves his hands for the successful prosecution of his work.

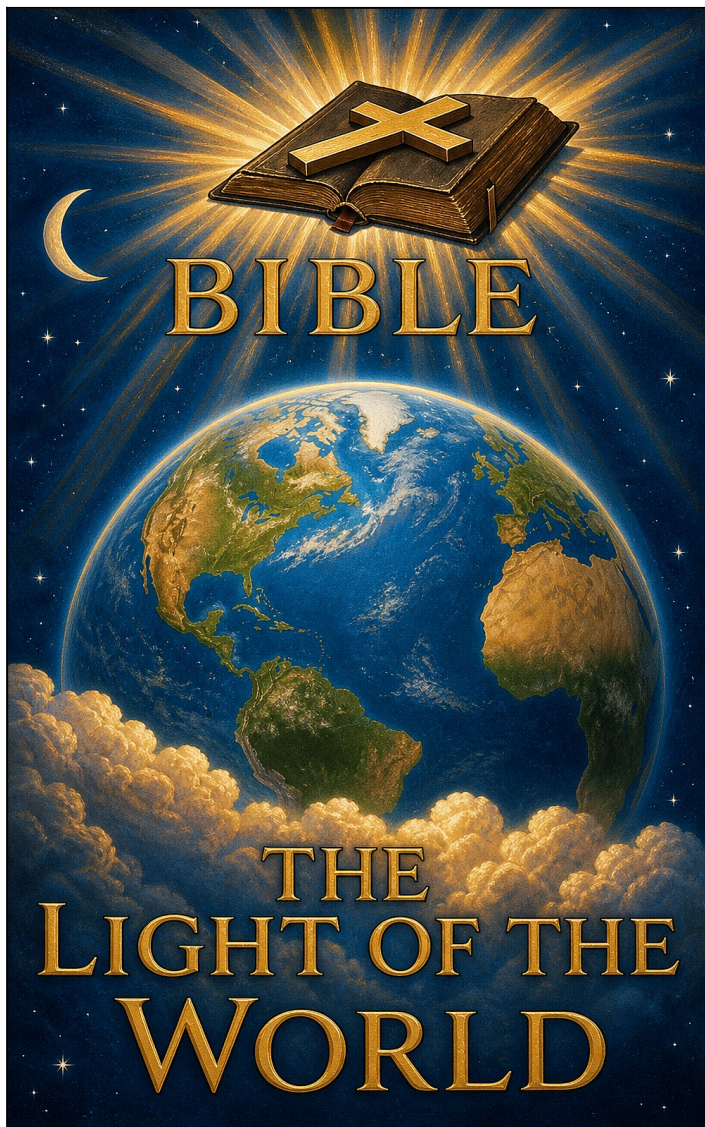
The men who have done the most in the world are those who have not been held back by doubt. Who ever undertook a great work that did not involve many difficulties the solution of which was not apparent? No man can see the end from the beginning; he cannot even see with certainty a single hour into the future. The pathway which leads out to the regions beyond, though plain enough where our feet are standing, becomes less and less distinct until, apparently, it is hedged up altogether; but no one turns back on that account. He knows there is an opening through

which the path continues on, and that he will see it when he comes to it. He would characterize as extreme folly the idea of standing still and waiting till he could see the openings all the way, before he proceeded further.

And such it is; and no less so in spiritual things than in things that are temporal and earthly. The truth is, we are surrounded on every side by that which we cannot understand. Look which way we will, we have plenty of chance to doubt. There is no place where we can take our stand and say that everything around us is clear and plain. If we reject the word of God because there are things in it we cannot understand, we only involve ourselves in more doubt; for now we must explain to our satisfaction how many things that come under our notice can be, if the Bible be not true. The phenomena of Christianity—not so-called Christianity, but that which is based upon the Bible—its power, its effect upon the minds and hearts of men, must be explained; and the unbeliever finds himself more in the dark than ever. Accepting the Bible as true, the power which is in the word, and all that history, both sacred and secular, testifies of its power in healing the bodies and the souls of men, is easily comprehended; but discarding the sacred word, we only find ourselves compelled to account for all this upon some hypothesis, we know not what. But those who disbelieve the Scriptures usually shut their eyes to the difficulties in which their unbelief involves them. In getting rid of the word they have released themselves from duties and responsibilities that were disagreeable to self, and this is generally the real thing for which they are seeking. It is much easier to doubt a disagreeable truth than one which involves no sacrifice on our part.

Look not at your doubts, at what you *do not* believe, but at what you *do* believe. Your “don’t believes” are of no value, either to yourself or anybody else. It is belief only that contains a positive force. If there is any part of God’s word that you do believe, take your stand on that and conform your life to it, and seek to the Author of that for further knowledge. Search not for things to doubt, but for things to believe. Make an advance move; walk out

in the light that you have, and you will find your pathway growing brighter and brighter, “unto the perfect day.”⁹⁴



⁹⁴ *Proverbs* 4:18.

24. Higher Criticism

Present Truth, November 23, 1893

THE “Higher Criticism” is not by any means a new thing. From the most ancient times there have been men who were able to demonstrate to their own satisfaction the impossibility of the truthfulness of the word of God. Two instances occur to mind just now.

The first instance occurred in Samaria. The city was closely besieged, and the people were perishing for famine. Then Elisha the prophet said:

2 Kings 7

¹ Hear the word of the Lord; Thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

But there was a certain “lord” in the city, who was something of a “higher critic;” and he said,

² Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?

He knew too much to believe so impossible a story, and he reaped the consequences of unbelief. The prophet said to him,

² ...Behold, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat thereof.

And so it was. The same day the Lord caused a panic to seize the besieging army, so that they all fled, leaving provision in abundance, so that provision the next day was as cheap as the prophet had said. The unbelieving lord had charge of the gate, so that he saw the plenty; but the people in their desperate rush for food trod upon him, so that he died without getting any benefit from it. It is to be feared that many of the “higher critics” of these days will meet a similar fate. If they do not come down from their lofty position, they will derive no benefit from the life which

God's word abundantly supplies, although they will certainly see it some day.

Another instance of the "higher criticism" occurred in the days of Christ. Certain Sadducees made great profession of believing the Bible, but they did not put any confidence in the Saviour's teaching concerning it. His words must be measured by their reason, the same as those of an ordinary man, and if they were not in harmony with their mind, they must be rejected. And so they brought the well-known question concerning the resurrection, which showed conclusively to their own minds, that Jesus was mistaken.

Notice the directness of Christ reply,

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

That was the trouble with this Samaritan lord. And that is the trouble with all who presume to criticize the whole or a part of the Bible. He who knows the Scriptures, will not sit in judgment on them. The ignorance of the Scriptures that is displayed by those who find so many errors in the Bible, is one of the most noticeable things in connection with the "higher criticism."

What is it to know the Scriptures? It does not necessarily consist in ability to quote portions of it, or to read or even to repeat it in the original Hebrew and Greek. Many a man who could read the Bible with ease in the ancient languages, knows far less of the Scriptures than some poor man who can do no more than spell out the text in his own language. He who receives the Scriptures as the very word of God, is the one who knows the Scriptures. Such a one will not doubt and criticize that which he does not understand. To believe the word of God, is to know it. He who does not believe cannot possibly understand.

25. Understanding the Scriptures

Present Truth, November 23, 1893

THE study of the Scriptures is a matter of vital importance to the welfare of every individual. In this day the Scriptures are little read and still less understood, even by the majority of those who profess Christianity. The result of this neglect will be seen, by many, only when it is too late to be remedied.

It is possible to read the Bible as if it were but the word of men. The language of the sacred volume contains very much that is instructive and entertaining from a primarily literary standpoint. Its narratives are as fascinating as any to be found in history or fiction. But it is not this that gives the Bible its excellence; but the fact that all its narratives, its poetry, its figures of speech, its lofty diction, are the vehicles of Divine truth which is able to save the soul; that its words are living words, giving life and power to whomsoever will receive them into the heart. The Bible contains many stories, but it is not a story book; it contains much history, yet it is not a history; neither is it a text-book for the study of literature; it is more than all of these; it is the word of God speaking to us and showing us the truths which pertain to salvation. It is the living word sent down from heaven to re-create and give spiritual life to souls that are dead in trespasses and sins.

A person may be familiar with all the inheritance of the sacred word; he may know the substance of what is treated of in the various books, and be able to repeat much of the language *verbatim*, and yet not know the Bible. He may know that Jacob wrestled all night with an angel, and yet not know how to obtain the blessings of God. He may know that the Israelites came up to a land of Canaan and there halted and did not enter in for fear of its high-walled cities and giant inhabitants, and yet not know the power and necessity of faith. He may read all the inspired record of ancient wanderings and conquests and settlements of God's chosen people, the history of their days of prosperity and of adversity, and not know that...

1 Samuel 15

²² ...to obey is better than sacrifice,

—and that justice, mercy, and truth are the weightier matters of the law. Yet these are the truths which God designs to teach us in His word—not historical truths, but ever living and present truths; not truths to enlighten us concerning some events that happened in ancient times, but to show us the mercy, wisdom, and power of God in His present dealings with men.

History is valuable because history repeats itself. Men learn wisdom for the present from the mistakes of the past. But the Bible is valuable because human nature is the same, and the power and love and wisdom of God are the same, and His righteousness the same, through all ages of the world.

The Bible was given to men to be understood, and it can be understood. God made no mistake when He dictated His word to the holy men of old. He knew the capabilities of those to whom it was sent, and is sent today. The only difficulty in the way of its comprehension is the carnal heart.

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

What is needed is spirituality. The spiritually minded man is a magnet to all spiritual truth.

¹⁰ The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Having the Spirit, there is no impassible barrier in the way of the understanding all that which God has spoken.

The inquiry of Philip to the eunuch is an important one for all.

Acts 8

³⁰ Do you understand what you read?

The eunuch was reading a most important statement of truth, but he knew not what it signified till the Spirit of God, through

Philip, enlightened his mind. And scripture is read today with little or no comprehension of its spiritual meaning. Truths of vital importance to the spiritual welfare are scanned by the eye, yet not perceived by the heart. They are truths that must be spiritually discerned, and no amount of human wisdom or intellectual keenness can grasp them without that power of discernment which the Spirit gives.



And why do we not have that power? The answer is, that self occupies the heart, instead of the Spirit of God. The two cannot dwell there together; self shuts out spiritual truths. We cannot see through self. It is perfectly opaque. No matter how plain the truth is, we cannot see it if self is in the way. And self is wise (in its own conceits).⁹⁵ It wants a chance to display its own wisdom, it does not seek for that wisdom which is from above.

⁹⁵ *Romans 11:25; 12:16.*

Spiritual knowledge is not head knowledge, but heart knowledge. It is a part of the life. It is the word of life hid in the believing heart. This is why spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. They come into the heart only in the form of an experience; and experience cannot come without the working of the Spirit. It cannot come without the entrance of the living word, which is received by faith. But truth and human wisdom are things altogether distinct from each other. Their testimonies are often contradictory one to the other, and in such a case the latter is always to be discarded. Human wisdom and reasoning have nothing to do with discerning spiritual truths.

Without the study of the word there can be no discernment of the real essential truths which pertain to the Christian life. But can we grasp them unless our study is in humility and with prayer for spiritual enlightenment. And this is a matter of vital importance, for salvation comes through the word. For the Word is God,⁹⁶ and salvation is...

1 Peter 1

⁹ ...the end of your faith,

—and faith is belief of the Word. Peter testifies also that the result of wresting the Scriptures is destruction.⁹⁷ It is not a question of taste or inclination with us whether we shall study and understand God's word; it is a matter of life or death, of eternal gain or loss. God has sent us His word. To slight it is to slight Him. He has made all provision that we should understand it. If we do not, it will be only because of the presence of self, which might have been put out of the heart but was not, and remained to obscure the spiritual vision.

⁹⁶ See *John* 1:1.

⁹⁷ 2 *Peter* 3:16.

26. The Devil's Best Weapon

Present Truth, November 30, 1893

DOUBT is the most effective weapon in the hands of Satan. When he can lead a person to doubt, it is but an easy step to open transgression of the Divine will. The devil works by persuasion; he is not allowed to work by compulsion. But to persuade the heart he finds it necessary to fill it with doubt. Doubt is the wedge by which he gains access to the human soul.

The apostle writes,

Hebrews 3

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

It is unbelief that leads an individual to depart from Him. When Satan came to Christ in the wilderness, he prefaced his temptations by the words,

Matthew 4 [also vs. 6]

³ If you be the Son of God;

—and he prefaced his temptations now also with an “if,” not an honorable one perhaps, but one which nevertheless is felt in our hearts. He uses every means to induce doubt,—the evidence of the senses, the evidence of reason, and even of the word of God; for Satan can quote the Bible as readily as anybody, as we find him doing when he tempted Christ. Of course he perverts its meaning, and is always sufficiently erroneous either in his quotation or his application of it to turn it into a lie; but those not versed in the Scriptures are often deceived thereby. Indeed, whenever the devil cannot deceive a person by getting him to trust in his reason or his natural senses for the discernment of spiritual truths, he will assail him with Scripture (in a perverted form, of course), and then if that person be not grounded in the word of God, he will have nothing to withstand Satan’s attack.

We doubt by looking away from God,—by looking away from the Word, which is God manifest in the flesh,⁹⁸ and letting that Word leak out of our hearts. When we look away from God, our finite eyes see nothing but that which would lead us to doubt. We could see nothing in ourselves, in our neighbors, in science, in philosophy, or in any earthly thing to which we may look, that will testify to the truths which pertain to salvation. Their testimony seems to us to be rather in the opposite direction. Darwin and Huxley looked at science; Voltaire at philosophy. The modern skeptic looks at his neighbors and sees their shortcomings, and many others lose their faith by looking at themselves, but he who looks at God, at His glory revealed in the face of His Son Jesus Christ, leaves no avenue open for doubt. Looking always unto Jesus, you will not stumble in running the race that is set before you.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *1 John* 1:1, 14.

⁹⁹ *Hebrews* 12:1-2.

27. Can't Remember

Present Truth, December 7, 1893

ONE of the most common complaints that we hear from religiously-inclined people is that they cannot remember what they read in the Bible. This they usually attribute to their poor memories. They wish that they had memories equal to that of some of their acquaintances, but since they have been deprived of that blessing, they resign themselves to what they suppose is their fate.

Now the fact is, in nine cases out of ten, that the same people have very good memories. Engage them in conversation on their special line of work, and they will tell all the details, the state of the market, etc., with a minuteness that will astonish you. Some of these "poor memory" people can give you all the gossip of the neighborhood for years back, without losing a link. And yet they "can't remember" a Bible text. The man who can in the dark lay his hand on any article among the hundreds or thousands in a shop, where the woman who can do the same thing with her household affairs, or who can tell what every woman of her acquaintance wears, even to the exact shade of every ribbon, cannot tell where a single passage of Scripture may be found. Why is this?

The answer is simple. The trouble is not with the memory, but with the attention. They give their minds to the one thing, and not to the other. It is the thing that makes a distinct impression on the mind, that we remember. A person may read half a dozen chapters in the Bible every day, in a desultory manner, and not remember anything. It is not to be expected that he should. But let him become so interested in the subject that for the time it fills his mind to the exclusion of everything else, and he will never forget it. It is not always the length of time that one bestows upon a thing, that makes him remember it. If the impression is vivid, a minute will serve to accomplish what hours would otherwise fail to do. It is not by any means always the case, but it is so

very often, that “poor memory” is but another name for “poor interest.” That same person will remember without difficulty that in which he is deeply interested.

The writer has often tried a plan which was very effectual in teaching him to remember the location of a text. It was very familiar, would come to his mind at appropriate times, but where to find it he could not tell. To turn it up in the concordance will do in case of emergency, if he must have it then, and the concordance is near; but the trouble is that the concordance is needed time after time for the same text. The first time the writer put the plan into use, he thought the desired text was in *Isaiah*, but was not sure but that it might be in *Jeremiah*, or even *Ezekiel*. So he began at the first verse of *Isaiah*, and read till he found it. In that case he found it before reading the book of *Isaiah* quite half through. He never forgot it. Sometimes he has had to read the *Psalms* half through in order to find a text, and it has paid, because he has not only fixed that one in mind, but has learned many other things as well.

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

This is a comforting assurance to those who have little or no ability to read the Bible, or who, by reason of age or infirmity, have little power of memory. There is life in every word that proceeds from God. One need not necessarily know all the word of God, in order to have life from it. If he knows but one word of God, and knows it as the word of God, it is life to him. If he knows more, that is life to him. Of course, if one has much of the word, and ignores part of it, he gets no life at all from any of it; because to ignore one word of God, is to ignore it all, since one life is in it all. Man must live by every word of God; but if only one word comes to him, he will get life from that.

28. The Word of Power

Present Truth, December 28, 1893

WHEN the angel Gabriel announced to Mary the coming birth of Jesus, and how it was to be brought about, he said,

Luke 1 [RV]

³⁷ No word from God shall be void of power.

Every word of God is living, and active; every word is life, so that man may live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Therefore the Lord says:

Isaiah 55

¹⁰ As the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

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

His word cannot return to Him void, because it is power and life; it will produce life, just as surely as the rain causes the earth to bring forth fruit. Therefore all that ministers and teachers of the Gospel have to do, is to let the word of God dwell in them, so that they can speak it, and God will see that it reaches those who need it.

Jeremiah 23

²⁸ He that has my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

²⁹ Is not my word like as a fire? says the Lord; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

1894



1. Proving a Thing by the Bible

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

“You can prove anything from the Bible.”

THIS assertion, so often heard, is utterly false, since the Bible is truth,¹⁰⁰ and only truth can be proved by truth. But it is true that you can persuade people’s minds to almost any doctrine, or at least make it appear plausible, by using the Bible. But whose minds—the minds of those who know God’s word? Ah, that is the point! You can prove (?) anything from the Bible to the person who does not know what the Bible says,—the person who reads it carelessly, hurriedly, and mechanically, or does not read it at all; the person who depends upon his own powers of intellect to distinguish between religious truth and error.

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁴ Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

No matter what we are intellectually; we must have spiritual discernment. Then we will...

Ephesians 4

¹⁴ ...be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness.

¹⁰⁰ *John 17:17.*

2. How to Understand

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

ALTHOUGH the Bible contains “the deep things of God,”¹⁰¹ and the statement of mysteries that even angels look upon with wonder, it is one of the easiest books to understand, if one proceeds in the right way. Jesus said that the things that are hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes, and that every one who receives the kingdom of God, must receive it as a little child. That is sufficient to show that the Bible is not a difficult book.

The thing necessary to the understanding of the Scriptures is simple faith.

Hebrews 11

³ By faith we understand.

We cannot reason ourselves into an understanding of the Scriptures; we must *believe* them if we would understand them. Faith makes us *know*. It is actual knowledge, not fancy, that we get by faith.

There are certain texts in the Bible that the beginner cannot understand. Peter says that Paul’s writings contain...

2 Peter 3

¹⁶ ...some things hard to be understood.

What shall we do with them? Do just what a little child would do,—leave them alone, and begin with something more simple.

There are many texts that consist of plain, simple statements that anybody can grasp. Believe them; meditate on them; take them for the good that there is in them for you. As you do this, you will see more and more in them. But more than this, you will find yourself growing into a knowledge of those difficult portions, for one Spirit is in the whole book.

¹⁰¹ 1 Corinthians 2:10.

Let it be a fixed rule never to argue with a text of Scripture. It is the same as arguing with God. If you cannot see any light in it, don't begin to find fault with it. Don't say,

"I can't see how this can be, when such and such a text says, etc."

When you do that, you are building up a barrier between you and the Scriptures, that will effectively shut you out from an understanding of them. Have patience; be content to wait. Faith and patience are inseparably connected, and it is only to faith that the righteousness of God is revealed.¹⁰²

Don't think that you can force your way into the inner sanctuary of God's revelation. You cannot pound the word of God to pieces, and even if you could, the pieces would still be impenetrable. But steady faith will cause the difficulties to melt away, and you will find in due time that, instead of an iceberg, you have in every word of God, pure, clear, flowing, sparkling, life-giving water.

¹⁰² *Romans* 1:17.

3. Empty Words and Powerful Words

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

IN THE *Revision*, the sense of the first part of *Ephesians* 5:6, is given thus:

Ephesians 5

⁶ Let no man deceive you with empty words.

Everybody knows what it is to have words spoken to them, mere platitudes, which come with a hollow sound that makes it plainly apparent that the heart and soul of the speaker are not in them. And talk of spiritual things, the words of man, coming only from the man, must be empty, and as sounding brass and clanging cymbal.

The words of God are not so. The angel said to Mary,

Luke 1 [RV]

³⁷ No word from God shall be void of power.

There is no emptiness here. The man who knows one word, as indeed the word of God, knows the power of God. Man is to live,

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

This is the encouragement to the person who awakens to the fact that he has neglected the study of the Bible, and knows so very little of it. While we seek to become acquainted with God more and more by His word, every word that we do know has for us life and power and salvation.

Then in working for the salvation of others we have but to open these words of God, so that they may be seen to be full of grace and truth.

Psalms 119 [RV]

¹³⁰ The opening of your words gives light.

The light is not exhausted with a first burst of glory, as the Spirit opens to us the word; but in every one is stored up the everlasting power and life of God; for “God is light,”¹⁰³ and it is His own life shining out upon us.



¹⁰³ 1 John 1:5.

4. Conflicting Voices

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

John 7:16-18

MANY persons are troubled to know how to decide what is the truth, when there are so many voices, each claiming to be the truth, yet all disagreeing. It need not be difficult; Christ gave a sure rule by which we may know the truth, and avoid being deceived. He said,

John 7

¹⁶ My teaching is not mine, but His that sent me.

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.

This of itself is sufficient. God is anxious to have men saved. Therefore He has made the way of salvation very plain. He has provided that no one who is earnestly seeking after truth in order that he may serve God, shall be deceived. Let the reader stop to think, and he will remember that those who have such difficulty in deciding what the truth is, are those who are seeking some excuse for their rejection of it. They wish to continue in their own way, and they ease their conscience by persuading themselves that their way is as likely to be right as any other, since there are so many different voices.

Following the text above quoted, is another statement of how we may know the truth:

John 7 [RV]

¹⁸ He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

This was said with reference to Christ, but it applies to every one whom Christ has sent. The false teacher seeks his own glory. We may sometimes detect that desire in the subtle flattery that he gives to some. Self will in some way be prominent in everything.

But the teacher who is sent by the Lord has only the Lord's message to deliver. Self does not appear at all.

Again, Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews,

John 5

⁴² But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.

⁴³ I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.

This is similar to the first text quoted.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

The reason given why the Jews could not receive Christ, who spoke the name of the Father, is that they had not the love of God in them. They did not wish to do the will of God, and therefore it was impossible for them to understand. The skeptic Hobbs once said that if the proposition that the sum of the squares of the two sides of a right-angled triangle equal the square of the hypotenuse, were opposed to men's self-interests, or their right to rule, there would not be anybody able to understand it. Some would say,

"It may be so,"

—but they would not be able to make a clear demonstration of it, or to see it when demonstrated by others. A willingness to receive the truth is the essential thing to knowing the truth; and the blessed thing is, that whoever is willing and anxious to know the truth, cannot be deceived.

But some people are so timid, so fearful of being led astray, that they hesitate about accepting what they really know to be the truth. There is no doubt in their minds that a certain thing is the truth, but they do not know what may be involved in it. They fear that it will lead them farther than they wish to go, and so they hold back. In this we see an unwillingness to receive the truth. It makes no difference that they may be perfectly willing to accept

what they now see; the fact that they fear what it may lead them to, shows that they are not really in love with the truth, since no truth can ever lead one into error.

Now what is the result of such a course? Just what we might expect, namely, that they will before long greedily accept some palpable error. He who rejects the voice of God, will readily accept a false voice. Strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, comes only on those who receive not the love of the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

It is not the love of some single truth, that will save men from deception, but the love of *the truth*. He who rejects the truth, must necessarily believe a lie; for there is nothing else but falsehood left for him to believe. And he who does not love the truth, and the whole truth, no matter what the consequences may be, is necessarily shut up to loving a lie. The only safeguard against deception,—against being led astray by voices that are not the voice of God,—is to accept unhesitatingly the voice that is unmistakably the voice of God.

John 8

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed;

³² And *you shall know the truth*, and the truth shall make you free.

John 10

¹⁴ I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

5. Come to the Fountain

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

Isaiah 55

¹ Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

THIS is an invitation to come and drink of the water of life. We do not have to wait till we reach the Paradise of God before we experience the refreshment of this longed-for draught. In the last chapter of *Revelation* the invitation is again given:

Revelation 22

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Whosoever desires this water of life, may come and take it now. The water of life has been dispensed to mortals just as freely as the bread of life. Without bread and water, a person could not live. Neither can he live spiritually without the bread and water of life. The Israelites drank of this water in the wilderness;

1 Corinthians 10

⁴ ...for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Christ offered the same water to the woman at the well in Samaria, and also said,

John 4

¹⁴ Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

The Psalmist declares that with God is the fountain of life.¹⁰⁴ God is...

¹⁰⁴ *Psalm* 36:9.

Jeremiah 2

¹³ ...the fountain of living waters.

The river of life that flows through the midst of Paradise, proceeds...

Revelation 22

¹ ...out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Wherever God dwells, there is the fountain of life. And thus when Christ dwells in the heart by faith, there is in that individual...

John 4

¹⁴ ...a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

God is in His word; and therefore His word contains the water of life. Jesus said,

John 6

⁵⁵ My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;

—and He explained His meaning by adding,

⁶³ It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.

To the tempter in the wilderness He said,

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

If man can live by the word of God, there must be in it the water of life.

The invitation given in the 55th of *Isaiah* offers us wine and milk. This is what the thirsty soul obtains when he heeds the invitation and comes “to the waters.” But Peter declares the milk to be the word.

1 Peter 2

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

Milk is that which nourishes, and wine is that which revives and cheers. And this is just what the word of God does to the one who receives it.

Isaiah 55

² Wherefore, [says the prophet,] do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfies not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

How can this be realized? The prophet explains:

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

God's word is the water of life, and whosoever will may come. It is free to all. Drink of that fountain, and you will realize that a river of living water flows through the desert, imparting to all who will take of it, everlasting life.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ *Ezekiel 47:8-9; Isaiah 35.*

6. What Is Protestantism?

Present Truth, January 4, 1894

THE name “Protestant” is derived from the *protest* of the German princes, which was read at the Diet of Spires, in 1529. The word therefore originated with the Reformation, and the principles of Protestantism are the principles of the Reformation.

It is a mistake to suppose that Protestant is simply a negation, or that it means any particular set of dogmas. Protestantism is not a statement of what Luther believed, nor of the doctrines that were held by Wycliffe, or Zwingli, or Melancthon, or any other reformer. But it does consist of the principles which prompted all the real reformers that have ever lived.

Wycliffe

Let us note that principle, as exhibited by a few of the reformers, beginning with Wycliffe, who was in many respects the greatest of them all. Of the principles that were common in the days of Wycliffe, and in which all the clergy had to be experts, Wylie says:

Philosophy then lay in guesses rather than facts. Whatever could be known from having been put before man in the facts of nature, or the doctrines of revelation, was deemed not worth further investigation. It was too humble an occupation, to observe and deduce. In the pride of his genius, man turned away from a field lying at his feet, and plunged boldly into a region where, having no data to guide him, and no ground for solid footing, he could learn really nothing. From this region of vague speculation, the explorer brought back only the images of his own creating, and, drawing up these fancies as facts, he passed them off as knowledge.¹⁰⁶

Wycliffe turned from this mass of rubbish to find in the Bible the only true wisdom, so that among the “heresies” which the Catholic Church found in his writings is this, that...

¹⁰⁶ *History of Protestantism*, book 2, chapter 1.

...wise men leave that as impertinent which is not plainly expressed in Scripture.

He held that:

If there be any truth, it is in the Scripture, and there is no truth to be found in the schools that may not be found in more excellence in the Bible.

And he also taught that:

Christ wished His law to be observed willingly, freely, that in such obedience men might find happiness. Hence He appointed no civil punishment to be inflicted on transgressors of His commandments, but left them to a punishment more severe, that would come after the day of judgment.

To those who fear that in some of his teaching he was going too far, Wycliffe said,

We do not sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or we should abide by the authority of His word, especially of the evangelists, as of greater weight than every other. It is the will of the Holy Spirit that the books of the Old and New Law should be read and studied, as the one sufficient source of instruction; and that men should not be taken up with other books, which, true as they may be, and even containing Scripture truth, are not to be confided in without caution and limitation.

The fact that he translated the whole Bible into the language of the common people, shows that in the Bible and the Bible alone was Wycliffe's hope of any real reformation.

Tyndale

Coming down to the days of Tyndale, we find him speaking thus in regard to false clergy of his day:

A thousand books had they rather to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrines, than that the Scriptures should come to light. For as long as they may keep that down, they will so darken the right way with their mist of sophistry, and so tan-

gle them that either rebuke or despise their abominations, with arguments of philosophy, and with worldly similitudes, and apparent reasons of natural wisdom, and with wrestling the Scriptures unto their own purpose, clean country unto the process, order, and meaning of the text; and substitute them in descanting upon it with allegories and amaze them, expounding it in many senses before the unlearned lay people (when it has but one literal sense, whose light the owls cannot abide) that though you feel in your heart, and are sure, how that all is false that they say, yet could you not solve their subtle riddles.

Which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue.

Luther

Luther's whole work was based upon the Bible. It was the Bible that he found chained in the monastery at Erfurt, that turned him from darkness to light, and was the beginning of the Reformation to Germany. The Bible was at that time chained in every sense of the word, for the common people could not get at it, and even if they could, they could not read it, because it existed only in an unknown tongue. But Luther unchained it, for he translated it into the simple language of everyday life, so that every peasant could read it.

In the controversy over the mass, Luther, although opposed to that ceremony, deprecated force, and said:

It is by the word that we must fight, by the word must we overthrow and destroy what has been set up by violence. It will not make use of force against the superstitious and unbelieving.

The mass is a bad thing; God is oppose to it; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were replaced by the supper of the Gospel. But let no one be torn from it by force. We must leave the matter in God's hands. His word must act and not we. And why so? You will ask. Because I do not hold men's hearts in my hand, as the potter holds the clay. We

have a right to speak; we have not the right to act. Let us preach; the rest belongs to God.

Our first object must be to win men's hearts; and for that purpose we must preach the Gospel. Today the word will fall in one heart, tomorrow into another, and it will operate in such a manner that each one will withdraw from the mass and abandon it. God does more by His word alone than you and I and all the world by our united strength.¹⁰⁷

It matters not that Luther was not always consistent with these principles. There has been scarcely a single reformer in the world, who continued a reformer as long as he had. But these are the principles which made all the Reformation that there ever was.

Protest at Spires

They were summed up in the following manner in the protest at Spires:

Seeing...that there is no sure doctrines but such as is conformable to the word of God, that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine, that each text of the Holy Scripture ought to be explained by other and clearer texts, that the Holy Book is in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness, we are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His holy word, such as is contained in the Biblical books of the Old and New Testaments, whither abiding anything therein that may be contrary to it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrines and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.

Summary

Thus it is that we cannot go to the writings of any man or any company of men to find out what Protestantism is. The reformers were but fallible mortals, and did not know all of the Scriptures.

¹⁰⁷ D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*, book 9, chapter 3.

Custom had a strong hold on the best of them, so that they were persuaded by long habit that many things which they allowed were really according to the Scripture.

True Protestantism is simply the truth of the Bible, without the addition of any man's opinion. Therefore to be a Protestant is not to believe just what Luther or any other reformer believed, but to hold to the Bible; and the Bible as explained by the Holy Spirit, as the sole guide in life. He who does contrary to this, is not a Protestant, no matter by what name he is called.



Young Calvin expounding the Bible to a Family at Bourges

7. One Voice

Present Truth, January 11, 1894

John 5:46-47

THE Jews professed to believe the writings of Moses, but they did not. Christ said to them:

John 5

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

The man who rejects one word from God really rejects the whole; for it is the same voice throughout. This is illustrated in the progress of so-called Biblical criticism.

- The critics began with the Old Testament, and the writings of Moses.
- Then Isaiah and the other prophets, and the Psalms were disposed of, higher criticism deciding what portions should be received.
- Now the critics deal with the words of Christ in the New Testament in the same manner.

This is as Christ said,

John 5

⁴⁷ If you believed not his [Moses'] writings, how shall you believe my words?

Christ spoke by Moses and the prophets as verily as by His own lips. It is the same voice, the same tone, and the same Gospel,

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

8. Knowing the Certainty

Present Truth, January 18, 1894

THE beginning of the book of *Luke* is on this wise:

Luke 1

¹ Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

² Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

³ It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto you in order, most excellent Theophilus,

⁴ That you might know the certainty of those things, wherein you have been instructed.

In the *Revised Version* the third verse is slightly different, thus:

³ It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto you...

It is most certain that Luke himself was not an eyewitness of all the things which he narrates, for he begins back before the birth of John the Baptist, and relates the story of his birth, as well as that of Jesus. He also tells the details of the temptation in the wilderness, of the transfiguration, and of many other things which occurred when he could not have been present. Therefore his...

³ ...perfect understanding of all things from the very first,

—was not through personal acquaintance with the events as they occurred. If we take the reading of the *Revision*:

³ ...having traced the course of all things accurately from the first,

—to mean that he had compared and sifted the different accounts, then we throw discredit upon his narrative; for how could Theophilus or we ourselves have the certainty of our knowledge

increased by the narrative of one who himself received it second hand?

What shall we do, then? Shall we doubt the accuracy of the *Gospel of Luke*? Not by any means. We shall take the most consistent course, namely, to believe that he received his knowledge by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is really what he himself claims.

It is a fact, which the one who reads only English can verify by consulting *Young's Analytical Concordance*, that the Greek word which is rendered in the common version by, "from the very first," and in the *Revision* by, "from the first," may properly be rendered, as it often is, by the words, "from above." In the following texts the words italicized are from the same word that is used in *Luke* 1:3. The reader will see that in these cases no other rendering would be admissible.

James 1

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is *from above*.

James 3

¹⁵ This wisdom descends not *from above*, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

¹⁷ But the wisdom that is *from above* is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

John 19

¹¹ Jesus answered, You could have no power at all against me, except it were given you *from above*.

John 3

³ Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born *again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

⁸ Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born *again*.

In the last two verses from *John* 3 the marginal reading is "from above," the same as in the others.

It is true that the word which is thus rendered occurs in one case in the Bible, where it must mean, “from the beginning,” namely in *Acts* 26:5; but the texts above quoted are sufficient to show that “from above” is a perfectly proper rendering. There is nothing whatever to forbid its being so rendered in *Luke* 1:3, thus:

Luke 1

³ It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things *from above*, to write unto you in order, most excellent Theophilus,

⁴ That you might know the certainty of those things wherein you have been instructed.

This is not only allowable, but is the only really consistent rendering. It is only from above that one can receive “perfect understanding” of anything, and especially of such things as Luke narrates; and it is only by wisdom “from above” that we can have certain knowledge of the truth of those things. Luke simply states the fact that he wrote by inspiration of the Spirit, which alone can make us “know the certainty” of those things which we believe.

9. Power of Elijah

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

THE angel Gabriel said of John the Baptist:

Luke 1

¹⁶ Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

¹⁷ And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

When we think of the power of Elijah our minds rest on the wonderful miracles that were wrought by him. He shut up and opened heaven, brought down fire, divided the waters of the river, and raised the dead. John “did no miracle,”¹⁰⁸ yet all the power that Elijah had was manifested in him. In what way? In the word that he preached. The power of God is not always shown in what are commonly called miracles. He who has the word of God dwelling in him, has the miracle by which alone all miracles were ever performed.

¹⁰⁸ *John* 10:41.

10. Two and Two Make Four

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

WE MUST believe as we go, if we would make progress in Bible study, learning of the Lord experimentally. Suppose we come to such a text as this,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

Suppose we do not believe it; so that we dare not say from the heart it is so to us. So we say,

“Never mind, we will go on studying the other thing; we cannot quite take this text now, but there are others which we can take.”

Let us see how this will work. Two and two make four. Suppose I do not believe it; and you cannot make me believe that it is so. So I say,

“Well, never mind; I will go on through the arithmetic. This is only a little thing, only one point; I do not see why you will not let me go on into multiplication, and fractions, and cube root. What is the difference if I do not believe in it?”

How much progress would I make, disbelieving this one thing? Just none at all. The whole progress in mathematics depends on that one point.

Suppose it could be demonstrated that two and two do not make four. It would overturn all mathematical calculations. If I do not believe that two and two make four it is just the same to me as though it were not so. I cannot believe anything that is based upon that. My disbelief of the fact does not affect its truth, so far as I am concerned two and two would not make four. My study of mathematics would be a confused jargon.

Suppose I am willing to go so far as to say that two and two make five; but I cannot get down to four. Now we will go on with our study of mathematics on that basis. Can we not ignore that little point, and still get good out of the mathematical study? Would not the discipline of the mind in the study be just as great if we went at it on the basis of two and two making five? The mind that got its discipline from the study of mathematics on that basis would be all wrong. It would be worse than no mind at all. Whoever put confidence in it, would be deceived and deluded.

So it is with this or any other text in reading the Bible into practical experience. There is no place for argument about it.

Galatians 2

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

It is a simple lesson. By believing it we know it is so, and this we must know in order to go on in the knowledge of the Lord, and of His Word.

11. How to Study the Bible

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

JUST believe in it.

1 John 5

²⁰ We know that the Son of God is come.

Believe it. Stop on that until you know it—know that He is coming *to you*; and know it, not because it is generally talked about and generally accepted as a fact, but because it is an experience *to you*. No one who does not know that the Son of God is come to him individually can know that He came eighteen hundred years ago.

²⁰ We know that the Son of God is come.

There is light in that one statement that will explain and make light the whole Bible.

12. Experience as Memory

Present Truth, February 1, 1894

NO PERSON ever has to make an effort to recall the incidence of a railway or other accident in which he narrowly escaped death; they do not have to set down in a note book the incidents of their wedding day, or of the birth of their children, or of the death of a dear friend, and con¹⁰⁹ them over frequently lest they should forget them. No matter how much they may be troubled with “a poor memory,” they can give all the details of such events without any effort.

Why is this? It is because these are matters of experience. These things are a part of their lives; they cannot forget them, because they have lived them.

Even so it is with the truths of the Bible. No one can ever forget the words of Scripture that he has made a part of his life. If he has experienced the truth, he will not have to cudgel his brains and spur up his memory, in order to be able to present it to some other person. He will simply be telling, in the words of the Bible, a portion of his own life history. Such presentation of truth will be with power. If you would remember truth, live it with the heart unto salvation.

¹⁰⁹ Con: “to learn; study; peruse or examine carefully.”

13. Seeing Objections

Present Truth, February 8, 1894

IT IS most unfortunate for us when we always see the difficulties in the way of a truth, because then we never get the good out of anything. A person never can get the good out of the Scriptures until he believes whatever truth comes to him from the word, whether he can see an inch ahead or not.

The difficulty in the minds of some is, they cannot see it all clearly, in order that they may believe. The spiritual way is to believe, in order that we may see. When the truth comes, seize it, get the good out of it, and you will find that the application of it in your life will open out the difficulties as fast as the Lord wants them opened to you. And that which cannot be known, we may be content to leave unknown.

14. When to Be Discouraged

Present Truth, February 15, 1894

WHEN to be discouraged? When in your study of the word of God, you can find where He has spoken a single word of discouragement to you.

15. Every Word

Present Truth, March 1, 1894

Luke 4:4

Luke 4

⁴ And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

MAN shall live by every word of God. Every word has the life of God in it. Wherever we get one word, that is the life, whether we understand another or not. But when we get the life in one word, we cannot reject it in another word, and still retain the life. While each word has life for us, and one word is enough to give us life, we must live by every word that comes to us. Thus we shall have life, and have it more abundantly.

16. Taking the Word as of God

Present Truth, March 1, 1894

NO MAN takes the Scriptures as the word of God unless he experiences the power of the word. A man may say,

“I believe that this is the word of God.”

Very well, take the text,

Isaiah 61

¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Now he says he believes the Bible, but he is afraid to say that he is free. Then he does not take it as the word of God. God has spoken to him saying that he is free, but he says that he is not free. Now if he accepted that as the word of God, he would be free, because he would know that God's word has power to give him freedom. God speaks with authority. No matter what a man may profess about the word of God, if he is not free, he simply does not believe in his heart that it is the word of God.

17. The Knowledge of Freedom

Present Truth, March 1, 1894

THE knowledge of freedom does not rest on the fact that we have escaped some temptation; but the escape from the temptation is made through the knowledge that we are free. It is not that we are to try for a time to see if we can live free lives, overcoming a temptation, and then conclude that we are free.

Many think this way: They were in close places, and they asked the Lord to help them, and He did, and so now they know that the Lord hears them. But suppose it had been an imaginary need, and the Lord had not sent what they asked for? They would have taken that as an evidence that the Lord did not hear them.

If the enemy can have his way, he will lead us to take counsel of ourselves, to put ourselves in the place of God, and find out from ourselves whether or not God is good, and whether He means what He says. The only thing that keeps anyone from knowing and seeing that he is free, is this consulting with himself. One thinks that if he can go on for a week or two living in freedom, he will then be able to say with confidence that he is free. But that is but bondage to self.

It is the Lord who proclaims freedom, and He proclaims it to those who are captives, and bound. By asserting the liberty which the Lord has given, and asserting it in the face of temptation, and in the midst of bondage, the knowledge of freedom gives the victory.

18. How Do You Know?

Present Truth, March 1, 1894

Romans 10

⁶ But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

⁷ Or, who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

⁸ But what says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

⁹ That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

THIS is the way of righteousness, and this is what we want to learn. Christ is...

John 14

⁶ ...the way, the truth, and the life.

Righteousness come by Him; but where shall we find Him? Who knows anything about Him? We have in the Bible the story of His life, and have read about His crucifixion and resurrection ascension to heaven; but how do we know that it is true? We never saw the men who wrote the Bible, nor anybody who did see them. Who knows that Christ ever came into the world to save sinners, about which we have read? If we should ask the average man whom we meet today if he believes there was and is such a being as Jesus of Nazareth, he would say,

“Yes, of course.”

You say you believe it, but what reason have you for believing it? Can you give any evidence of it?

This is a fair question, and one that we ought to expect that the world will ask. The Lord expects that people will ask us a reason

of the hope that is in us, and tells us that we should always be ready to give an answer.¹¹⁰ There are different ways people have of answering this question; but there is only one right way. Now and again we see in papers professedly devoted to Christian evidences, efforts to substantiate the truth of the Gospel by references to contemporary heathen writers who had mentioned the Scriptures, or by quotations from the ancient fathers, who professed faith in them. We sometimes see quotations from the sayings of great men of past days, or from men still living, who said they believed the Bible; and if they, with all their learning and greatness, believed it, why should not we? But that is no reason to us at all. We cannot believe it because somebody else does. We may believe the person to be honest in his belief, but that cannot make us know it. No man, however great and learned, can believe, but that cannot make us know it. No man, however great and learned, can believe for another, no matter how mean and ignorant he may be.

Now the question comes to every professor of Christ,

“How do you know that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever lived?”

It is a question which every disbeliever in the Bible has a right to ask, and to which he has a right to expect an answer. It will do no good to berate him as an infidel; that will only serve to confirm him in his unbelief by leading him to think that his questions cannot be answered. How will you answer? You may tell him you believe it. Very good; but that will not convince him, for there are other people who believe other things that are not true. He does not question the fact that you believe, but wishes to know why. You may quote to him great men, but what of that? The Lord himself would not admit that as evidence. On one occasion he said,

John 5

³⁴ I receive not testimony from men.

¹¹⁰ 1 Peter 3:15.

It makes no difference how many men the questioner might be referred to, he would still want to know how they knew it was true.

Knowing by Faith

There is only one way of knowing, and these words of Paul in *Romans* point that out. We have searched for Him, but this scripture says we have not to ascend into heaven to bring Him down, nor into the deep, to bring up Christ, but...

Romans 10

⁸ The word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believes unto righteousness.

This is the righteousness of faith; and in *Ephesians* 3:17 we read that Christ dwells in the heart by faith. We can really know nothing in this world about Christ except that which we know by personal experience. The testimony of hearsay is valueless. We must tell only what we know. We have read about the crucifixion and resurrection, that...

1 Peter 3

¹⁸ [Christ] suffered for sins, the just for the unjust;

—that,

Romans 6

¹⁰ In that He died, He died unto sin, and in that He lives, He lives unto God;

—and that...

⁹ ...death has no more dominion over Him;

—but how do we know this is true? By proving it.

Witnessing to the Truth

Romans 10

⁹ If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus.

Now to confess a thing means to tell the truth about it. We are here as witnesses for God, just as the believers were sent out after Pentecost to be witnesses unto the Lord in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Isaiah 43

¹⁰ You are my witnesses, says the Lord.

We are to be witnesses with Him, who is the...

Revelation 3

¹⁴ ...Faithful and True Witness.

When the Saviour was asked before the Roman governor if He was a king, He “confessed and denied not.” And Paul says He “witnessed a good confession” before Pontius Pilate.¹¹¹ In doing this He said,

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

We are to confess with Him to the truth.

One who is a witness must run no risk in his testimony. When we go into the witness box, we are put under oath to tell the truth, and only what we *know* to be truth. It will not do to tell what we *think* is true, or what others think is true. There is always the possibility that what we merely think is true is not so, and if we tell what we merely *think* is true, we run the risk of per-juring ourselves. So we dare not speak of things which we do not know positively.

Is Jesus of Nazareth raised from the dead? It may be you have talked about Christ and the resurrection. Do you know that He was dead, and is risen? The whole Gospel is summed up in that. The angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Christ, and said that the message was one of glad tidings of great joy, which should be to all people. Then if you have known the fact, and do

¹¹¹ 1 Timothy 6:13.

know it, it is joy to you, and you must have found joy in proclaiming it. If you have not found all joy and peace in it, then you must have missed the Gospel in some way, and if you have professed to believe it, then you have been bearing false witness in your testimony.

It may be that you have assumed the birth of Jesus as a fact so well established that you thought it was hardly necessary to prove it.

“Everybody,” you say, “believes that Christ lived and was crucified.”

No; there are more who do not believe it than there are who do believe it. Even in what are termed “Christian lands,” there are many who do not believe it, and we cannot rest in the assumption that everybody believes it.

False Witnesses

Perhaps in the very telling about it to others, there was a dolefulness in the testimony which belied it. Unbelievers coming into a meeting where professed believers were in the witness box testifying before the Judge, would often get the idea that it is a very gloomy thing to be always giving up something. There is such a sadness, such a feeling of want and dissatisfaction in many testimonies, that they would think there was little attractiveness in Christ. There is a bearing of false witness before God; because the angel from heaven announced that this was a message of great joy, and here are those talking about it who give the impression that there is no joy in witnessing to it, but a hard striving after something that we hoped to get but did not have.

Then, again, you have perhaps said that Jesus was raised from the dead, and have assumed that this was so generally accepted that you did not need to prove it. Some day some one may come to you face to face, and ask you how you know that Jesus was raised from the dead. You may say,

“Oh, the Bible says so!”

But he will ask you how you know that the record is true. Here is a live question which comes to us eighteen hundred years after Christ. And were it not possible for us today to give just as sure evidence, and to speak just as positively as did the apostles, we should have to give up. If you do not know of positive knowledge that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, then it is not possible for you to witness to it. Surely witnesses for God ought to be as sure of their testimony as witnesses before an earthly magistrate are required to be; and that means that you know of your own personal knowledge, irrespective of what others have told you. If you cannot do that, you know nothing about it, and must stand down from the witness box.

The apostle Paul was brought before the magistrate on this very question at one time. He was on trial for his life, accused for saying that there was another King than Caesar, namely, one Jesus. But the Roman government, on investigation, said he found it a question of religion only, about one Jesus whom the Jews said was dead, but whom Paul affirmed to be alive.¹¹² A very simple question, but one which involved the whole Gospel. Paul could stand before the court and testify under oath that Jesus was risen from the dead.

It is a wonderful thing. You are telling men that One who was dead came to life. How do you know it?

“I was reading it in a book and...”

But hold, if we want the testimony of a book, we will get the book; you must tell only what you know.

“Well, I was at a place and heard a man speaking very positively, and he told a story which fitted together perfectly; and he made the matter so plain that I believed it.”

But again you are missing the point; it is not some other man’s testimony that you are to give, but only your own. Did Jesus re-

¹¹² Acts 25:17-19.

ally die, or is the whole story a myth? Was it merely assumed that He died and *rose* again?

How do we know that Jesus lives? We have talked with Him, we have heard His voice, and we can say positively that He lives at our house. Suppose that a man has disappeared, and foul play is suspected. We are called to testify as to our knowledge of him, and can say that he is not dead, because he is living at our house, and we have been in conversation with him every day. That is evidence enough as to our knowledge of him. Moreover, there is a record to put in evidence. The record says that Jesus was...

Romans 1

⁴ ...declared to be the Son of God with power,...by the resurrection from the dead.

Now this Being with whom we are in communion every day corresponds exactly with the specification of the records. We find the truth of the record demonstrated by Him every day.

Here are habits of one kind and another, which might be enumerated by the score. In fact, our whole life was perverse. In spite of ourselves, we found that these habits would assert themselves and make us miserable. There was impatience, and we would say words that were wrong, and, although resolving most solemnly to refrain from allowing such feelings to enter the heart, we found that it was impossible to shut them out. We were helpless in the hands of these habits, and could not shake them off.

What We Have Seen

Well, we saw Jesus of Nazareth. We saw Him being led to Calvary. We saw Him crucified. Someone may say,

“I don’t believe you saw that.”

We cannot help it; we saw Jesus set forth crucified before our eyes,¹¹³ and that for which He was crucified was the sin of the

¹¹³ *Galatians* 3:1.

world,¹¹⁴ *our* sin. And when He told me that He...

Galatians 2

²⁰ ...loved me, and gave himself for me,

—I believed Him. In fact, we had had evidence of His love before that. He had borne witness from our earliest infancy to His love, and, although we had gone our own way and denied Him, yet...

Acts 14

¹⁷ He left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

He did not withdraw His love and His life from us. So we had previous witness of His love for us and His power.

Created with Him

So when He told us again that He loved us and would deliver us from the sin that bound us, we believed Him, and gave ourselves to Him. He said He would identify himself with us, and He did; although sinless,

2 Corinthians 5

²¹ He was made to be sin for us,

—counting our sin as His. We had gone astray, and the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.¹¹⁵ So when He was crucified, He was crucified for our sin. We saw Him lifted up, and we consented to be crucified with Him. And we knew it was a crucifixion too. It was no fancy; for when we came to give up these evil things, we found that the whole life was composed of them, and it was giving our life. We found that the disease of sin was in the blood itself, and it was taking our very life to have it taken away. But we said to the Lord,

“We identify ourselves with You, as You with us;”

¹¹⁴ *John* 1:29.

¹¹⁵ *Isaiah* 53:6.

—and so we were crucified with Him. And in that crucifixion we found Him a wonderful Being, the like of which had never lived on the earth before; for, although crucified, He still lived, and when we accepted His terms, and told Him that He might take our life in the crucifixion, we took His life for us, and ever since He has lived with us.

Living with Him

How do we know He lives? Is there any evidence that we are not dreaming? Yes; because our faith brings Him as a living being into our heart, and that thing which we found utterly impossible is now done. We can say,

Galatians 2

²⁰ The life which I know live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Therefore we can witness that Jesus Christ is not in the heavens, nor in the deep, but in our heart. And this is the way in which the apostle Peter says we are to be able to give a reason for our hope. He says,

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

It could not be done in any other way, because Christ in us is the only hope of glory.¹¹⁶ He in whom Christ is not formed, has no hope at all.

Someone may say,

“I should like to know this.”

You may know it just as well as anybody if you wish.

Romans 10

⁸ The word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart;

¹¹⁶ *Colossians* 1:27.

that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

⁹ That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believes unto righteousness.

The reason is that Christ is righteousness, and He dwells in the heart by faith; our faith in that which is a fact, makes us know the fact.

Faith in a Fact

If the story of Jesus of Nazareth were a myth, no faith that we could put in it would make it a fact. One cannot believe a lie so strongly as to make it a truth. We cannot believe in a thing which does not exist, so strongly as thereby to make it exist. Therefore that which through faith we find to be an actual fact, must have been a fact before we believed it. Our faith in the story of Jesus, that He was born, and was crucified, and that He lives, produces an actual power in us to do that which we could not do ourselves, or which no power of man could do. And this shows that the story is not a myth, but a present, living reality.

We did not believe in that thing before the power operated in our heart, but the power worked in us because we believed. We saw Jesus Christ lifted up before us, and we were crucified with Him, and in that crucifixion we demonstrated the fact that He is risen from the dead. The crucifixion is because of sin, and it is a giving up of life in all there is of this life. But...

1 Corinthians 5

¹⁰ If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

The living is the life of Christ in us. The joy of the Lord is the strength of our life.¹¹⁷ So let us not tell our neighbors and friends that the Christian life is a doleful one. But there is no use in our telling them that it is not a good life, unless the joy and peace of it are seen in the telling of it, and are manifested in the life.

Giving and Taking

One part of the life is a giving up, a crucifixion. But do not tell the world that this is all there is of Christianity. We cannot persuade men to give up their sinful habits and pleasures by simply talking about giving up.

“What is there left?” they will say.

If they give their sinful pleasure up in Christ, seeing Him crucified, and are crucified with Him, in the very giving up they get something else,—they get His life, and this life is peace and righteousness. In Him are...

Colossians 2

³ ...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

In Him all things come which are in heaven and earth.

Romans 8

³² He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Each man may have but a very small portion of this world, but if a man had all the world, we can say to him,

“Give this up, and take Christ and in Him you will have all the treasures of the universe; for in Him are all things, and in Him we have obtained an inheritance.”¹¹⁸

The Spirit of God is to make known to us...

Ephesians 1

¹⁸ ...what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

¹¹⁷ *Nehemiah* 8:10.

¹¹⁸ *Colossians* 1:16-17 [RV], *Ephesians* 1:11.

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us.

We are to give everything we have, and what vast possessions are ours to give up? What have we? Our wretchedness, misery, poverty and blindness. We had an impatient disposition. What returns did it make to us? The dislike and ill-will of many. The pleasures we thought were yielding us something at the time, but afterwards they left emptiness or disease behind them.

Romans 6

²¹ What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Although we had not felt to the full the death, there was a certain looking forward to the judgment; and the fear of death resulted from the continued bondage. Now the word comes,

“Give up all this, and take Christ and His riches, and in His strength you will overcome the evil habits whenever they attempt to put you under the old bondage,”

—and your faith in that act makes it a fact to you. Your belief in the fact that Christ is crucified and risen, makes it a fact that Christ lives in you, and brings all the joy of the universe into your life.

We go to Calvary. We may never have seen that spot just outside the walls of Jerusalem. Not many have either the time or the means to go there; and it would not add to their faith in Christ if they could. We are glad we do not have to go to Jerusalem, either to see the place or to see Him crucified. Calvary is right here. Here is the cross set up, and we see Christ set forth crucified among us.¹¹⁹ We see Him as Isaiah saw Him,

Isaiah 6

¹ ...high and lifted up.

He is crucified for all the sins of the flesh, and they are all ours. We say,

¹¹⁹ *Galatians* 3:1.

“Lord, I will go to the cross with You, and be crucified with You.”

And as we see Him lifted up from the earth we see in Him something wonderful,—we see in Him joy in the midst of tribulation; we see in Him righteousness under provocation such as no man on earth ever had. There are power and attractiveness in all these things.

Lifted Up from the Earth

And now we believe, and are crucified with Him; and what comes to us? As He is lifted up from the earth, we are lifted up with Him from the earth. O, the preciousness of this fact to every one who knows and believes that there is anything better than this earth and its sin, and who can joy in the sunlight of heaven! The marvel of it is that our belief, makes us know it, because we experience the same thing, and so can bear witness that it is a fact. Then we can go and bear witness to the world that Jesus Christ is crucified and risen again. We know it is so, because we not only saw Him crucified, but were crucified with Him, and are raised to life with Him.

And that was not the end of it. We found that, although it was an unequal partnership, He made it equal. We gave our life, which had only poverty and death in it; His part was to give His life, an endless life, which we took as righteousness and peace to us.

Peace in Conflict

This is how we know that the Bible is true, and that Jesus of Nazareth is raised from the dead. We say from the heart that Jesus is crucified for our sins; He died for us, and now He lives, and we know He lives; for our faith brings Him into our life, and faith keeps Him there, so that in the midst of temptation there is peace and deliverance. Yes, even in the face of the enemy, He gives rest and assurance.

Psalm 23

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

The enemy surrounds us, and is ready to make a charge upon us, but the Lord says:

“Never mind them; come and let us sit down at the table, and feast our souls upon the good things prepared. Their power is gone, and they can do no harm.”

So we laugh them to scorn, and delight ourselves in the abundance of His table, with the enemy raging all about us.

Every enemy that comes against the soul to destroy it is the same old enemy that came against Jesus of Nazareth, and He conquered them. They know Him; for Christ gained the victory on the cross. On the cross He completed the work, and the enemy was everlastingly overthrown, and all his strength taken away, together with all his armor wherein he trusted.¹²⁰ When the enemies come, we know that it is only a show of armor they bring; so we say to them,

“Christ is risen, and Christ lives in us.”

That which we state with positiveness because we believe it, and our belief makes it true to us because it is everlastingly true in itself, whether we believe it or not,—that act puts the enemies to flight; for they have been beaten and overthrown by the same life, and therefore have no desire to try conclusions with it again. So we hold up the life, and claim it as ours, and it is our safety and defense. The victory is already gained for us in the life of Christ, so that all we have to do is to allow ourselves to be continually crucified with Him, that thus we may have His life in us. And thus any man who is a sinner, and knows himself to be a sinner, and desires to be free from that bondage of evil habits, may say,

1 Corinthians 15

⁵⁷ Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹²⁰ *Luke* 11:21-22.

19. Doubt and Murder

Present Truth, March 8, 1894

JESUS read the prophecy of *Isaiah*, in the synagogue at Nazareth, and began to say to the people, whose eyes were fastened upon Him,

Luke 4

²¹ This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

²² And all bore Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.

The Spirit of the Lord was indeed upon Him, and as the result His words produced conviction. Involuntarily they responded to the power of the Spirit.

Then came in another feeling. They said,

“Is not this Joseph’s son?”

They gave place to doubt. True, the words which Jesus had read and spoken had come with the force of the Holy Spirit, and they had acknowledged their gracious power; but they could not make the gracious words harmonize with their reason and experience, and so they lost the blessing.

The same thing is repeated again and again in these days. People hear burning words of truth, which cause their own hearts to burn in response, and then doubt comes in under the guise of “prudence” and “caution.”

“We must not be too quick to accept new things.”

“Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?”

“We will not commit ourselves until we see how this thing is going to turn.”

“We cannot be too cautious.”

These and many other things hold many people back from following the convictions produced by the Holy Spirit. Looking at

the matter from a worldly critical point of view, they conclude that the influence of the Spirit was only a sudden impulse, which it would be most unwise to yield to. They are confirmed in this view by the fact that, as the result of their unbelieving calculation, the Spirit's voice has been silenced, and they no longer feel that response in their hearts to the words of truth. And thus carnal wisdom proves their ruin.

But this is not the end. The Gospel narrative tells us that the very people who at first bore witness to the gracious words of Jesus, seized Him a few minutes later, and attempted to throw Him down headlong from a precipice. Murder was in their hearts. That they did not kill Jesus was only because they had not the power.

What caused this change? Nothing but cherishing of a single doubt. Here is a warning for those who think that doubt is a trivial matter. Every doubt has murder connected in it. Those doubts which seem so perfectly "natural" that you scarcely call them doubt, but only the manifestation of proper caution are the things which if cherished, will cry,

"Crucify Him."

It is not a light thing to doubt the witness of the Spirit of God. One of the things which made David a man after God's own heart, was the fact that he "made haste, and delayed not" to keep the commandments of God, when they were made known to him:

Psalm 119

⁶⁰ I made haste, and delayed not to keep your commandments.

Take heed not to quench the Spirit by doubt.

20. Healthful Doctrine

Present Truth, March 8, 1894

THE marginal readings in the Bible frequently give the more literal rendering of the text, and are often more suggestive than the free translation. In the *Revision* the marginal rendering of the words, “sound doctrine,”¹²¹ “sound speech,”¹²² etc., occurring several times in Paul’s epistles to Timothy and Titus, is “healthful” teaching, “healthful speech,” etc. that is what it is literally.

Sin is a disease, a deadly taint that has stricken into the very heart and life.

Isaiah 1

⁵ The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.

Disease is but the working of death and decay, and so it is that...

Romans 6

²³ The wages of sin is death.

Thus it is that the remedy for this malady must be “healthful doctrine,” “healthful” words. No words of man can avail anything; for there is no life in human words. Life is the only antidote of death. The word of God is living and vitalizing, as Jesus said,

John 6

⁶³ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

Psalms 107

²⁰ He sent His word and healed them.

The one who would help his fellow men to escape from sin must declare the word of life as it is, taking nothing from it nor

¹²¹ 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1.

¹²² Titus 2:8.

weakening it by putting human interpretations into it. Men may have a doctrine of Christ as a theory, and be for ever arguing and debating about it, but *the* doctrine of Christ cannot be held as a theory, as it is a life, vigorous and healthful. The man with a theory has a form without life, diseased and revolting, and no matter what the shape may be he cannot give it the warmth and glow of health.

The apostle carries this idea of healthful words further in *1 Timothy* 6:3-4:

1 Timothy 6

³ If any man teach a different doctrine, and consents not to wholesome [healthful] words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

⁴ He is puffed up, knowing nothing, and *doting* about questionings and disputes of words.

The word “doting” is put in the margin “sick.” It means that diseased condition of mind and heart that sees in the healthful doctrine of Christ only something to be discussed and argued about, a form of words. This is why it is that only the individual who has been healed by the word and knows the vitalizing life of it, can declare the health-giving word of God.

There is need of this preaching of healthful words now. Deadly error is stalking about endeavoring to mask itself with the Scriptures of truth, but its emasculated form shows readily enough that there is no health and life in it. Yet human nature that loves sin loves to have it so. Warning of the dangers of the last days, when the apostle was shown that perilous times would come, he tells Timothy to...

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the word,

—the *healthful* word of God;

³ For the time will come when they will not endure *healthful* doctrine.

This charge comes to every believer now; for we are in the perils of the last days, and the very word of God is our only safety and health.



21. The Right Way to Read the Bible

Present Truth, March 22, 1894

Original title: Front Page

WHATEVER a man eats that is not real food, is not only useless to him, but is a positive injury, since it taxes the digestive organs, without adding any strength. Therefore anything that one eats, that is not or cannot be assimilated, and does not go to build up the system, is only a damage.

Even so it is with our reading. If we read that which is not useful,—that which does not tend to build us up, and make us stronger mentally and spiritually,—it is only an injury to us. It is even worse than eating that which is not good food. It is both a waste of time, and a wasting away of the faculties.

It is much the same if we read even good matter, and do not think as we read. To be sure, we are not having our minds poisoned, as when worthless trash is read; but the mental powers are not strengthened by such reading, but vitiated instead. Such a manner of reading weakens the memory, and is little better than dreaming. In short, if we do not get positive nourishment by what we read, our reading is, to say the least, of no benefit to us.

Apply this now to our reading of the Bible. If we read it simply as a story book, we get no real benefit, except that we are kept from reading something that is not good. If when we read the promises, or the record of victories which pertain to those promises, we see nothing more than the bare fact that certain men had certain experiences, then our reading is like swallowing clumps of food that is in itself good, but which is not digested nor assimilated.

The Bible is the language of the Spirit God spoken through men. Consequently it is not the language simply of the men who penned it. The Spirit of God, who knows the human heart and its needs, as well as the Divine gifts, has put language into the

mouths of certain men, which may be used by all. So when we read the words of David,

Psalms 103

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul,...

³ Who forgives all your iniquities,

—we are to appropriate that language as our own. If we do so, we shall understand the Scriptures, and shall be benefited by them. But if we are content to read it simply as David's experience, it is the same to us as though it had not been written.

Let us learn to read the Scriptures in this way, and the Bible will soon be a new book to us. The reading of it will be a delight. When we read reproofs and warnings, we shall know that they mean us personally; and when we read the promises which always accompany reproofs, we shall rejoice in them as much as though we were addressed by name. When we read the statement of experience, we shall adopt it as our own, and realize all the benefit of it.

Until we learn to read the Bible in this way, we cannot be said to really believe in it. We may indeed believe that God spoke to and blessed David and Paul; but if we do not make that language and blessing our own, we do not really believe the word, for it is addressed to us. If you wish to know if you really believe the whole Bible, you may test yourself by this text:

Galatians 2

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

If you read this merely as Paul's experience, then you have not yet learned to believe the Bible. But if in reading it you can speak that word "I" as meaning yourself, and can repeat the text intelligently as the language of your own heart, as the Spirit of God meant that you should, then you really believe not that verse alone, but the whole Bible, and the joy of God's salvation is yours.

22. Christ and His Prophets

Present Truth, March 22, 1894

IT WAS Christ who inspired the writings of all the prophets. Peter testifies that...

1 Peter 1

¹¹ The Spirit of Christ...was in them,

—and Christ himself said of the Old Testament scriptures,

John 5

³⁹ They are they which testify of me.

If we slight them, we are slighting the testimony of Christ; and if we read them without seeing in them Christ and His eternal life, we are no more profited thereby than were the Jews who would not come to Christ that they might have life.¹²³

¹²³ *John* 5:40.

23. How Moses Knew

Present Truth, March 22, 1894 (July 11, 1895)

PP Editor's note: This series appeared in March 22, 1894 in four consecutive short articles: *How He Knew*, *Not an Allegory*, *Creation and the Cross*, and *For a Time of Need*. In the next year, July 11, 1895, it appeared as one article under the title, *How Moses Knew*, with subheadings for the other parts, but it was missing the last part, *For a Time of Need*. I've combined the smaller consecutive articles into one for this publication, using their titles as subheadings, and included the last part also. This is, then, the most complete form.

HOW did Moses learn about the creation? There was no man living when the heavens and earth were created, so he could not have learned the story from man. Those who assume that he compiled the narrative from various existing documents, do not help the matter at all, for no man who lived before Moses had any better chance to learn about creation than he had. Even Adam had no more personal knowledge of the facts of creation than Moses had; for creation was complete when Adam first saw the light. He saw nothing of the process himself. Then how did Moses know what to write? Did he imagine it? Not at all; he wrote just what he knew, because the Lord God told him. He who created the heavens and the earth...

Psalm 103

⁷ ...made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel,

—for the Lord spoke to him mouth to mouth.

Numbers 12

⁸ With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

This is the way the entire Bible was written,

2 Peter 1 [RV]

²¹ For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Not an Allegory

Some people like to strike a happy mean between the idea that the first chapters of *Genesis* are actual history, and the theory that they are pure fiction, by claiming that they are allegorical. Of all such it may be said,

Luke 23

³⁴ They know not what they do.

They do not realize that any view other than that those chapters describe actual occurrences is a denial of the whole Bible, and of the very Gospel. The 3rd chapter of *Genesis* tells how sin came into the world, and contains the first promise of the Saviour who should die for the sin. To deny the literalness of that account is to deny the story of the cross. Upon the 1st and 2nd chapters of *Genesis* the fourth commandment is based. If they were not literal history, the Sabbath would be gone. This indeed is why those chapters are discredited. But they who discredit the story of creation, and the Sabbath, do not realize that in so doing they are denying sanctification. God says,

Ezekiel 20

¹² I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

Without the knowledge of creation and the Sabbath there can be no knowledge of perfect sanctification.

Psalms 119

¹⁶⁰ Your word is true from the beginning.

It is all...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ ...profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Creation and the Cross

The eternal power of God is clearly seen in the things that He has

made.

Romans 1

²⁰ For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Creation is the measure of God's power. Not that any one save God can measure it, because it is infinite; but the power manifested in creation is the same power that saves men from sin.

Romans 1

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

So that the Gospel is simply creative power applied to sinful men.

Ephesians 2

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

But the preaching of the cross is also the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁷ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Christ crucified is the power and the wisdom of God, and so it is the Gospel. On the cross Christ shed His blood to reconcile us to God, in the forgiveness of our sins.

Colossians 1

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Romans 5

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The blood is the life:

Leviticus 17

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.

¹⁴ For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, You shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eats it shall be cut off.

So that it is the taking of the life of Christ that reconciles us to God. But we have redemption through His blood, because in Him were all things created.

Colossians 1

¹⁴ In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins:

¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;

¹⁶ For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him.

He is the source of the creation:

Revelation 3

¹⁴ And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

All created things sprang from His life. So that the power of the cross, by which we are saved, is the power by which the worlds were made. Thus it is that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, or a new creation. Only as we consider the power of God as manifested in creation, can we learn the wonderful power of the cross. David said,

Psalms 92

⁴ For You, Lord, have made me glad through your work, I will triumph in the works of your hands.

And Paul wrote,

Galatians 6

¹⁴ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And both of them gloried and triumphed in the same thing.

For a Time of Need

If we do not grasp that which we profess to believe, and lay hold upon it for deliverance from sin in time of temptation, it shows that we do not understand that thing about which we talk. Every word of God may be laid hold of in time of temptation, and it is deliverance. We are to lay hold of the life that is in the word; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free.

Romans 8

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

We are to find life and godliness in every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

24. The Milk of the Word

Present Truth, March 29, 1894

1 Peter 2

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

THE Bible speaks also of giving meat; and yet we never grow so old in Christian life that we can't get along without this sincere milk. We grow by that all the time. Those words are to the most mature Christian, as well as to the new convert. In the natural life the child lives by its parent, its mother; before birth its mother breathes for it, and afterward it derives its nourishment solely from her. That which is true of the infant and its life by the mother, is true as concerns man and God.

Acts 17

²⁸ In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

Christ says,

John 6

⁵⁷ As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eats me, even he shall live by me.

25. They Need Editing

Present Truth, March 29, 1894

MANY people who do not acknowledge the difference between a form of words and the living word of God, that has power in it to put into the life that which it speaks, make much of the so-called sacred books of Eastern religions. But even though the heathen writers sometimes spoke beautifully of morals and truth, they had no knowledge of any power to put the morality and righteousness into the life. Consequently the tendency of their teaching was to unrighteousness.

The man who tries to get righteousness out of himself always gets unrighteousness; because there is nothing else in self. This inherent wickedness of self is revealed in all the “sacred” writings of false religions, and apologists of the heathen cults are obliged to cover up the wickedest portions in order to plead their cause with any degree of confidence.

A writer in the *Dawn* takes Professor Max Müller to task for omitting large portions of the originals in his editing of *Sacred Books of the East*, without indicating the omissions in any way.

When challenged, he frankly admitted that he had left out portions for the very sufficient reason that if he had translated them as they exist in the originals he would have been prosecuted for publishing an obscene literature.

26. By Bread Alone

Present Truth, March 29, 1894

Matthew 4:4

Matthew 4

⁴ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

THESE are the words of Christ, and their application is as universal as the term “man.” It is for each one of us to ask ourselves whether we find life in the word of God, or whether we live merely by physical food. If the latter, we are certainly not living as God designs that we should.

Some of us spend much time thinking about what we shall eat and how we may contrive to obtain it. Certainly then we should welcome any additional means of life that is placed within our reach, and endeavor to appropriate all that it has for our benefit.

God is the Author and Sustainer of all life, and He wants man to recognize this fact. He it is that gives all living creatures their food. But He sent the Israelites manna direct from heaven, that they might recognize that behind all the operations of nature are God and His word, without which those operations would instantly cease.

But while there is not life for man in everything that grows, there is life for him in every word spoken by God. He gets that life by faith. Simple, perfect belief, united to the smallest word of God, constitutes the...

Matthew 17

²⁰ ...faith as a grain of mustard seed,

—which is able to remove mountains. God is life, and faith connects us with God; and he who is connected with God cannot die until God wills it; and even then he simply “sleeps” for a season, having still eternal life in Christ.

27. Knowledge Puffs Up

Present Truth, April 5, 1894

Original title: Front Page

Jeremiah 9

²³ Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches;

²⁴ But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

NOTE well, and remember, that it is the knowledge of God himself, in which we are to glory. We are not to glory in any knowledge that we possess, even though it be the knowledge of the Bible. While knowledge of the Bible is necessary, when we take pride in such knowledge, or glory in it, we are really glorying in ourselves; and knowledge which leads to that, is not knowledge of God.

It is possible for a person to backslide, and to be grievously deceived while diligently studying the Bible. Not because the Bible is at fault, but because self, instead of the Holy Spirit, guides in the study.

1 Corinthians 8 [YLT]

¹ Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

1 Corinthians 13

¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge;...and have not love, I am nothing.

That study of the Bible which does not lead to the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost, makes Pharisees, but not Christians.

28. Tradition

Present Truth, May 3, 1894

A CHURCH PAPER makes the following comments on one of the tendencies noticeable in Nonconformity today:

Tradition! A remarkable article in a Nonconformist paper upon tradition has the following suggestive sentence: "Mediately or immediately we owe to tradition all that we know of Christianity." Further on, the writer advises Nonconformists to teach their people more about the great Church traditions and the splendid heroisms associated with them. Just so; but what would the writer have said ten years ago about traditions? Truly the Dissenters are moving.

Churchmen or Dissenters moving toward traditions are surely moving in the wrong direction. It is a mistake to suppose that the knowledge of Christianity rests upon tradition. The knowledge of Christ is an actual living experience, and the knowledge that the Scriptures are the word of God is not received by tradition—for the Lord needs not that any man should testify of Him—but is proved every day in the life of every real Christian. Christianity is not an ecclesiastical formula, but a life. The believer finds actual life in the Scriptures, and needs no testimony of men to tell him that he is living by the word. Ecclesiastical tradition has always led wrong. Christ went counter to the "tradition of the elders,"¹²⁴ and charged them with making void the commandments of God by their traditions.¹²⁵ The Reformers were met everywhere by the cry,

"Tradition! Tradition!"

It is not a move toward tradition but toward the fountain head of truth, the word of God, that is needed now.

¹²⁴ *Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:5.*

¹²⁵ *Matthew 15:6.*

29. The Great Reality

Present Truth, May 10, 1894

IT IS a sad truth, yet in the light of Scripture not a strange one, that the great majority of people in all lands are unable to distinguish, in the objects for which they are seeking, between realities and shadows. This is so because man, in his fallen condition, with his understanding darkened, does not perceive the relation of the spiritual to the real. Spiritual things are to him but fancies and vanity; and leaving the spiritual out of his calculations, he is shut up to that which is elusive and transitory, and incapable of affording the satisfaction for which he longs. There is nothing real that is not made so by its relation to and dependence upon the spiritual.

Jesus Christ is the great reality. This is the fundamental truth which lies at the very beginning of all knowledge of real things. He is the reality of all good things. And He has not withdrawn himself from men; He will be in our lives, if we will but let Him. Having Him, life is a grand reality; but without Him, we have nothing that is truly real. Without Him, there is nothing that is truly good, or enduring, nothing that can give a permanent peace and satisfaction.

Jesus Christ is not a myth or a fancy, or a figure of speech. Many speak of Him as if He were; many, even of His professed followers can give no proof that He is anything more than this. They convey to the world the impression that the good represented as coming from Him is fancy rather than fact. But this does not alter the truth. No person, act as he may, can make or unmake truth. But he can demonstrate truth; and many have demonstrated the truth of the reality of Christ as the Saviour of men, and the reality of that which He gives to men here in this life. It only remains for each one to take Christ as his Saviour and demonstrate the matter for himself.

Christ is, indeed, the reality of all things real. The word of God declares that all things were made by Him,¹²⁶ and that...

Colossians 1

¹⁷ He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

Not only did He create all things, but He upholds all things by the word of His power.¹²⁷ So then whatever is real is so because it is upheld or maintained by the word of Christ. Take that word away, and things would disappear back into the original void.

All created things will, therefore, when viewed aright, speak to us of Christ. They are, as it were, a shadow of Him who is the substance, pointing us to Him as the shadow points to that which casts it. In all created things God speaks to man, and reveals himself to our race. The heavens declare His glory, and the whole earth is full of it.¹²⁸ The reason men do not see it is because they refuse to see God in His works. They refuse to believe what God has said of His works. They prefer to see with their own eyes, and to put their own interpretation upon things rather than the Lord's.

There is a voice that is continually calling to men, and those who will heed it will know the pathway of peace and happiness, and walk therein.

Proverbs 1

²⁰ Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets:

²¹ She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she utters her words, saying:

²² How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning? and fools hate knowledge?

²³ Turn at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, and I will make known my words unto you.

This voice is the voice of God; for His voice alone is truly the voice of wisdom. The wisdom of the world is foolishness, and God

¹²⁶ *Colossians* 1:16.

¹²⁷ *Hebrews* 1:3.

¹²⁸ *Psalms* 19:1; *Isaiah* 6:3.

alone has true wisdom, being Omniscient.¹²⁹ It is God's voice that speaks reproof, and says,

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof.

He speaks to those who by their lives show that they are "simple," choosing the chaff rather than the wheat, delighting in "scorning," and hating knowledge; missing the rest and grasping after shadows and delusions; and He invites them to turn from these vanities unto that which is of enduring worth.

Hear what His voice is saying:

Isaiah 55

¹ Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters; he that has no money, come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfies not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

What shall we eat? For answer turn to the words of Christ:

John 6

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

⁵⁴ Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁵⁵ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

The unbelieving Jews, to whom these words were spoken, queried how the Saviour could give them His flesh and blood; but Jesus explained it by saying

⁶³ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

God spoke those words in Christ, for Christ said,

¹²⁹ *1 Corinthians 1:20.*

John 14

¹⁰ The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

Eating His word, they ate the flesh and drank the blood of Christ; for He is the word of God.¹³⁰

Here, then, is the reality of life,—to live by the word of God. He has given us His word so that all may have it, in the sacred Scriptures. He that will believe, so that He builds upon that word, will show that every word of God has life in it, so that man may not live by bread alone, but...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

God's word is the primary source of all life, the bread being but the word in visible form. To such a one life will be full of glorious realities, and the invitation is,

Revelation 22

¹⁷ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

¹³⁰ *John* 1:1, 14; *Revelation* 19:13.

30. The Word Alone

Present Truth, May 10, 1894

EVEN at the Church Association meeting, there was considerable stress laid upon the intention of those who made the Prayer Book. "The Prayer Book, the whole Prayer Book, and nothing but the Prayer Book," was called for. But one speaker spoke with effect against the effort to "whitewash" the Prayer Book, as though Christians, with the word of God in their hands, needed to settle what certain men may or may not have intended when they made a Prayer Book, or drew up certain statements.

That is a truth every Christian Churchman ought to see; that every emphasis placed upon preserving the work of uninspired men as though it could not be altered or were binding upon Christian consciences is begging the whole question of the authority of tradition. Ritualism is rampant because it is the natural growth wherever men are allowed to define and set bounds about truth, beyond which the Spirit of the Lord cannot lead their successors.

31. What Does It?

Present Truth, May 17, 1894

THAT veteran missionary, Dr. John G. Paton, the apostle of the New Hebrides, is visiting London, and has been an inspiration on missionary platforms, as he has told of what the Lord has done in the islands. It is worth remarking that missionaries who have been spending their lives among savage races, and have seen the power of the Gospel changing savages into Christians, and introducing a “civilization” which makes the islands more peaceful and honest than our home cities or towns, are not the men who discuss higher criticism, and minimize the authority of portions of the word. When Dr. Paton tells of the changes he has witnessed, he says it is all due simply to the reading of the word. This is the testimony from every place where the power of the Lord is allowed to operate.

We need not go to distant fields, either, to learn the power of the word to change the life and give actual strength. The trouble is, that so many at home who read the word do not believe it, or do not think the Lord means what He says. Putting their own, or some man’s interpretation upon it, it becomes only the word of men, and then they find no life in it, and must search for “Christian evidences” to prove that the word is true. And thus they are troubled over the findings of worldly science and the work of the critics.

The man who believes the Bible never has to look outside of his own life for evidences of its authority. The reason why the change that comes over some of these heathen and savage communities is so marked, is that the people are just simple and childlike enough to believe the word.

32. Is Christ Divided?

Present Truth, May 24, 1894

1 Corinthians 1

¹³ Is Christ divided?

JESUS CHRIST is the Truth. All truth is in Him, and He is the Word, and He declared,

John 17

¹⁷ Your Word is truth.

Then when a person says he will believe something, but does not want to believe other truths that are stated in the Scriptures, he virtually attempts to divide Christ—to take a little and reject a little. Some like to believe anything that does not disturb their ease, or inconvenience them, but fight against believing plain words of God pointing out sins to be given up, and duties to be performed. Such a course is not only inconsistent but wicked.

Christ is not divided. He is crucified; and when men shrink from the cross they find in any truth, they are really refusing to be crucified with Him, and therefore reject Him.

33. Looking at the Difficulties

Present Truth, May 24, 1894

WHEN the Apostle Paul was convicted of sin and shown his duty, he says,

Galatians 1

¹⁶ Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

The Lord had spoken, he knew it; and he neither went about to ask men if he should yield to the Lord, nor took counsel with his own natural feelings and tendencies. It meant an entire change in his life, separation from his former co-religionists, and the renunciation of all the world; but what was all that when dealing with the Lord of all?

The man who settles once for all that the Lord is God, will save himself anxiety and worry and sinful procrastination which makes the service of the Lord appear so hard to the man who, when conviction comes from the word of God, goes about to take counsel with men or with his fears. If the Lord says a thing, that is established, and the person who lays hold upon it will find that the Lord will take all the responsibility of fulfilling His word.

When we begin to conjure up the difficulties in the way of following the Lord, it shows that we do not believe Him to be the God revealed in the Bible. The word that reveals a duty to us does not show it to make it hard for us, but offers in the very word the power which will bless us by enabling us to do the duty, and by making known the joy of following the Lord. When we look at the selfish side of the problem we turn away from the power and the blessing, and of course the demand seems hard and impossible.

Mark 4

¹⁹ [Some] hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the loss of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

The word has power to make the fruit abound in blessed obedience and peace. But when anxiety for self and temporal things chokes the word, and does not allow it a place in the heart, there is no fruit. The secret of Christian service is in believing that the Lord means just what He says, and that He is just what He says He is. Then instead of hesitating and distrusting, the believer will take counsel with God, who is “wonderful in counsel,”¹³¹ and the life will be a happy walk with God.



¹³¹ *Isaiah 28:29.*

34. It Is Called Heresy

Present Truth, May 24, 1894

A MAN who really acts on the principles laid down by the Lord in His teaching is considered very peculiar by the world, and a worldly church.

The German recruit who some time ago refused to be put in training to kill his fellow-men was referred to the medical authorities to determine as to his sanity.

The missionary who would refuse to ask help of his consul or the authorities to punish those who misuse him or destroy his property is sometimes seriously blamed, even by mission authorities, because he is so peculiar as to pray for those who spitefully use him, instead of punishing them.

Depend upon it, the man who reads his Bible and believes just what the Lord says will find himself considered very peculiar.

It has always been heresy in the eyes of the great religious world to believe the Bible. The Apostle Paul really believed the Scriptures which the Jewish Church professed to believe, and he had to confess that...

Acts 24

¹⁴ ...after the way which they call heresy,

—he worshiped God,

¹⁴ ...believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

35. What Does It Mean?

Present Truth, June 7, 1894

Mark 9:9-10

AS JESUS was coming down from the mount of transfiguration, with Peter, James, and John,

Mark 9

⁹ He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

¹⁰ And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

What did it mean? It meant just that, and nothing else. But they were sure in their own minds that it could not mean that Christ should really die and rise again, and so they kept wondering and speculating as to what it could mean. And that is the way that thousands of the followers of Christ are doing today. They read something in the Scriptures, and straightway they ask,

“What does this mean?”

They feel quite sure that it must have some mysterious meaning, different from what the words themselves indicate, because they have it settled in their minds how it must be, and are sure that the thing actually declared cannot ever take place. Thus they miss the instruction and comfort of the Scriptures, and are unprepared for the things that come.

If the disciples had learned to take the Lord at His word, they would not have been thrown into such confusion when He was crucified. They learned better afterwards; let us learn now from their example to believe that the word means what it says.

36. The Descent of Man

Present Truth, June 7, 1894

THE *Ascent of Man*, as a new book is called, is a subject which many are congratulating themselves upon, because of the superior intelligence of men of the present day which enables them to correct the Bible record of man's creation and history. A wise man of old, to whom was given wisdom greater than to any other man, spent his life in studying man from another point of view than that occupied by modern scientists, who confessedly base their attempts at argument upon the assumption. As to the result of the wise man's study, we are told,

Ecclesiastes 7

²⁹ Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright:
but they have sought out many inventions.

The descent of man always comes when he becomes vain in his imagination. Professing himself to be wise, his foolish heart is darkened. The 1st chapter of *Romans* tells how men with true knowledge can degenerate into barbarism in process of time, and it also tells of the power that can redeem man from barbarism and sin. The only "ascent of man" that there is will be found to be due to obedience to the Gospel.

37. Not of Man

Present Truth, June 7, 1894

THE writer was once talking with an infidel, who, in the course of the conversation, referred to the course which one of his neighbors had taken in a business transaction. That action referred to was evidently dishonest, and the infidel said with some warmth,

“Now I don’t think there was any Christianity in that.”

“Of course there was not,” was the reply, “but the fact you think so, shows that you know that Christianity does not sanction such things. It shows that you know in your heart that Christianity is good; why then do you not accept and practice what you know to be the truth?”

This was a new way of looking at the matter, and he acknowledged that he had no excuse.

The Gospel does not derive its character from the character of the men who profess it. It comes from God. Men may live ungodly lives, but that does not disprove the Bible. On the contrary, it makes the truth the more vivid by the contrast. Men may deny the faith; they may apostatize and say that it is all a sham; but that does not shake the Gospel any more than it would make the fortress of Gibraltar fall down if some of the men who are now stationed there should desert, and say that it is built on cardboard. It is solid rock, no matter what may be said of it.

So whenever we hear that some professed follower of Christ has dishonored the name, or is teaching some wild doctrine, we can say as Paul said when some fell into the error of supposing that the resurrection was already past,

2 Timothy 2

¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure.

God is true, and His word is sure, though every man be false.

38. Misunderstanding

Present Truth, June 21, 1894

VERY often when a verse of the Bible is read someone will say,

“I understand that so and so,”

—giving an idea which is not found in the words of the text. It is quite common for people to think that they are warranted in treating the Bible in that way,—reading it, and then putting their own construction upon it, regardless of what it says. In such a case it is a mistake to say,

“I understand.”

They should say,

“I misunderstand.”

Much of that which is called an understanding of the Bible is only a misunderstanding of it; and very often when a man proceeds to tell his “ideas” upon a certain Bible subject, he simply gives expression to his lack of ideas upon the matter.

39. The Garden of God's Word

Present Truth, July 5, 1894

IT IS painful to see men going to the writings of the Fathers and the decisions of councils to learn the truth. Whatever truth these saw, they learned simply by believing what God says, and anyone can find the same in the Scriptures today. And as the Fathers and the councils interpreted the Bible rather than believed it, their writings and decrees are so full of pagan philosophy that the humblest reader of the Bible who believes what he reads, knows more of the truth than they did.

In the days of Christ, the Church interpreted the Scriptures, and followed the traditions of the elders, and the customs of their fathers, instead of the precepts of God.¹³² They made void the word of God by their traditions.¹³³ Reproving them, Jesus said,

Matthew 15

¹³ Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up.

Then why need we spend time searching about in the tangled maze of the words and teachings of fallible men? We may go ourselves direct to the garden of God's word. There we shall find every plant that God has planted.

The word of God is His great garden, in which he planted His promises and precepts for the children of men. Abraham plucked blossoms from it, but they still bloom for those who are the children of Abraham by faith. All the promises of God are in Christ, and by the power of the endless life, always springing up from Christ the root, the fruit of the word is always there, no matter how many have appropriated it.

Then let no one go outside into the tangle and the bramble to find the truth. Walk in the garden itself. Just as in Christ's day, so

¹³² *Matthew 15:3.*

¹³³ *Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:9, 13.*

now there is a great overgrowth of tradition that seeks to obscure the truth. Go to the garden direct, no matter how luxuriant or how aged the growth, unless you can find it for yourself rooted in the garden of God, and can there pluck it and find life in it as you take it, be assured that it is not of God's planting, and has in it the seeds of sin and death.

The word of God is a garden of delights. It is a living word, and we live by it; it is the water of life springing up, and we may drink of it. Who would forsake such a paradise as this for the confused tangle of human tradition?



40. The Positiveness of Ignorance

Present Truth, July 5, 1894

THE Bible is the only book concerning which all people feel free to express decided opinions without any knowledge. On other matters people are generally silent until they study them, but everybody feels himself competent to discuss the Almighty and His works, without having any real knowledge of them.

Almost any man will give you his views upon the Bible and the Gospel, although he might fumble through the Old Testament for half an hour looking for the book of *Revelation*, or might turn the leaves of the New Testament in the vain hope of finding the book of *Isaiah* or *Daniel*.

Why is it that the Bible has to be treated so differently from other books? We do not say that people who do not know the Bible should take the opinions of those who do, but that they should become acquainted with it for themselves, and not talk positively about that which they do not understand.

41. Consistency

Present Truth, July 12, 1894

A VERY faulty idea prevails quite extensively as to what consistency is. Most people think that it is never changing one's views and practices, so if they have held a wrong opinion once, or have followed a bad custom, they will hold to it for ever, in order to be consistent. Such a course is most inconsistent.

The consistent man is the one who always follows the light of truth. This necessarily means that he always changes the worst for the better. He acts in harmony with a principle, and does not make his own past life the standard.

42. Spiritual or Fanciful?

Present Truth, July 19, 1894

IT IS impossible for man to give a spiritual meaning to any text of Scripture; and therefore it is impossible for anyone to “spiritualize” away the meaning of any text; but he may take away its meaning for himself and others who listen to him through his own fancy or imagination.

Every text of Scripture is spiritual and its meaning is spiritual, and only by the aid of the Spirit can its meaning be impressed upon the heart. This spiritual character of the Scripture is impressed upon the words by the Spirit which dictated them, and no man has power to impress a spiritual nature upon anything. All men could do is to make Scripture appear fanciful, by “interpreting” it according to his own imaginations. And this he has no business to do. For the Spirit is the interpreter and the guide into all truth.

The spiritual meaning of all Scripture is therefore to be revealed by the Spirit itself; and this being so, it follows that the Bible must be its sole interpreter, or in other words, that what the Spirit has said in one place must be understood in the light of what it has said in another place; each text must be understood in the light of all others.

He who presumes to interpret the word of God in any other way, only darkens counsel by words without knowledge.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ *Job* 38:2.

43. Is Bread Food?

Present Truth, July 26, 1894

IS BREAD food?

“Of course it is,” everyone replies.

How do you know?

“We have tried it, and proved it; we have eaten it, and it has given us life and strength.”

Very good; that is evidence enough.

Reasoning About It

No sane man thinks of questioning the fact that bread is food, and that it gives strength. The reason is that we learn to eat before we learn to doubt. We prove the value of bread before we know enough to question it. But if we could arrive at the age of manhood before ever seeing bread, many people would starve to death before they would believe that it is of any use. Even while starving, some would doubtless “prove” to their own satisfaction that bread could not sustain life.

Personal Experience

Suppose that there is a man in such a condition. He has heard that bread will give him strength, and he comes to me and asks me to prove it to him. I say to him,

“Very well, here is a piece; eat it and see for yourself.”

He replies,

“No, no; I will not try any experiments. I must first have satisfactory proof that it is good, and then I must understand how it works.”

But I cannot tell him the mystery of the transformation of the bread into bone and muscle. As to experimenting, however, I tell him that there is nothing doubtful about it, for I and thousands of

others have proved it abundantly. I can give him evidence, but not demonstration; he must demonstrate by his own experience.

Is the Bible Truth?

This is the subject of a religious meeting, which I saw announced the other day. No minister or other Gospel worker ought ever to raise such a question, or to discuss it for a moment when others raise it. It is just as foolish to argue about it as it would be to argue the question whether bread will support life. The only proof is by eating. Give men the Word, and let them prove its value by eating it. If they do not believe it, give them some more, and leave it with them, until its power convinces him. He who will for a moment admit that the truthfulness of the Bible is a debatable question, does not know it as he ought to know it, and has no business to attempt to teach others.

Taste and See

Psalm 34

⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusts in Him.

That is the true method of proof. Jeremiah took the proper course, and he found satisfaction. He said,

Jeremiah 15

¹⁶ Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

Go and do likewise.

Faith Is Substance

People seem to think that faith is fancy. As soon as you speak about the power of God's word in them that believe, they think that you have unsettled everything. They have an idea that it is your faith that gives the efficiency to the word, and that anything else would do as well if one would only exercise his imagination. Let them try their imagination on a loaf of sand formed so as to resemble bread made from flour. All the imagination in the world

will not give a man an ounce of strength from such a loaf. The more he eats, the worse off he is. But his imagination is not faith.

Faith lays hold of substance. Faith grasps realities. Faith does not clothe a worthless thing with an imaginary value, but appropriates the value that actually exist in its object.



44. Indifference

Present Truth, August 9, 1894

THE word of the Lord—and every word of God—is something to be lived. The temper of mind which discusses matters of truth theoretically, as simply so many facts to be determined and weighed, and properly labeled, as one would examine and ticket a specimen of rock or plant, is not the one that finds the truth as it is in Jesus.

Believing the truth is living it, and the man who lives,

Matthew 4

⁴ ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,

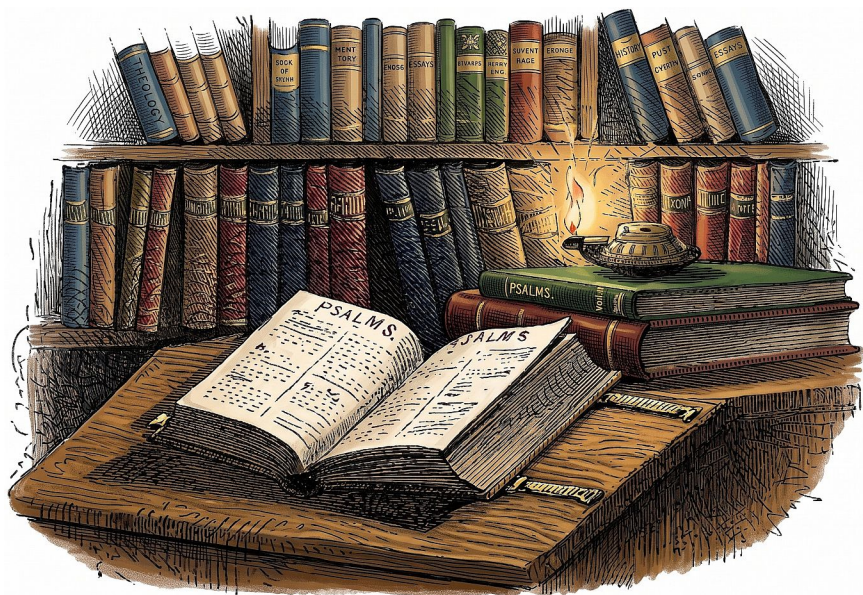
—knows that every word is a living, vital thing, and not to be treated indifferently. Although the Scriptures are so easy of access today, it is plainly apparent that indifference to what the Lord says is the characteristic of the age. Mrs. Lynn Linton recently summed up this condition as follows:

For liberty to worship God in the way which seemed to him the sole and only truth—for liberty to live the self-respecting life of a free citizen in a free land—a man would go to the stake in the days of a long ago; and the coward who would have faltered, the renegade who would have turned back, would have been of all men then the most miserable and accursed.

Times are changed, and the supreme test of faith and valor no longer exist. We have loosened the bonds of personal and social obligation to their widest extent; and beyond obedience to the common law of the land, where disobedience would render us amenable to the policeman and the magistrate, we have no great principles to maintain. We have waxed fat, and we do what is right in our own eyes. Nothing is quite right, and nothing is very wrong; and things do not matter a hair's breadth one way or the other.

The age has lost its perception of lines and colors. In place of the old broad black unmistakable lines of the archaic wood-block, we have come to the confused vagueness of the new process. In-

stead of the distinct dye, which left nothing uncertain, we have come to complex tints which are neither pink and yellow, neither blue and green. And in like manner, instead of things being absolutely right and absolutely wrong, we cherish an emasculate kind of *via media*,¹³⁵ where the old distinct and separate spheres overlap and intermingle, and where we are not quite sure of anything. This is our predominant iniquity.



¹³⁵ *Via media* (Latin for “middle way” or “middle road”) refers to a moderate path or compromise between two extremes, avoiding radicalism and finding balance, famously used in Anglican theology to describe a middle ground between Catholicism and Protestantism, and rooted in Aristotle’s concept of virtue as a mean between excess and deficiency.

45. Harmonizing Scripture

Present Truth, August 9, 1894

AT A RECENT Sunday afternoon meeting of religious people in Westbourne Park, the discussion turned upon “Paul’s Attitude toward Women,” and the speaker who introduced the subject said that if Paul’s teaching collided with Christ’s, Paul’s must go,—which sentiment elicited an expression of approval from the audience, and was endorsed by several speakers to follow. But who is to say whether Paul’s teaching collides with Christ’s or not? The Apostle Peter endorsed Paul’s writings, for he said,

2 Peter 3

¹⁵ And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you;

¹⁶ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

And Paul himself said,

Galatians 2

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ lives in me*;

—and also,

Romans 9

¹ I say the truth in Christ; I lie not, my conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Ghost.

Those therefore who presume to question the harmony of Paul’s writings with other portions of Scripture, assume to stand above Peter and Paul as expounders of Divine truth. But if such men wish their assumptions to be taken seriously, they should first show their ability to write something worthy of being compared with the epistles of either of those writers.

46. Walking in Light

Present Truth, August 16, 1894

ONE way of stating the difference between a Christian and one who is not a Christian, though he may claim and appear to be such, is to say that he who loves the light is a Christian, and that he who loves not the light is not a Christian. The light is the truth; and he who loves not the truth does not please God.

Those who are afraid to hear and know all the will of God, which may be known from His word, lest they should thereby learn of disagreeable duties, are not in harmony with God. If God were first in their love, and if they had faith in Him, they would feel no hesitation in such a matter, but would desire to know more and more of the will of God, because they had pleasure in doing it.

Conversion is something more than mere outward conformity to some part of the will of God, even though that conformity may cover all that the individual knows of His will. There must be also a *love* of the truth. Those who have not the love of the truth will not keep the truth when they receive it. And such, says the Apostle Paul, are the ones in whom Satan will work...

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ ...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,

—making them his dupes and causing them to believe the worst of lies.

The wicked will be condemned in the Judgment not only for the truth which they heard and knew, but for that which they might have known yet refused to know. And since the result of turning away the ears from hearing the truth is to be turned unto fables,¹³⁶ they will incur further condemnation for the lies which they have thereby been made to believe and practice. Those who

¹³⁶ 2 Timothy 4:4.

excuse themselves now from doing God's will, by refusing to hear and learn that will, will not dare to utter their excuse at the bar of God. Their course only proves that they love self more than God.

John 3

²⁰ For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

²¹ But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 4

²⁴ God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.



47. The Soul's Rudder

Present Truth, August 23, 1894

James 3

⁴ Behold, also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, withersoever the governor lists.

⁵ Even so also the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things.

EVERY unwise use of the tongue turns the soul out of its proper course and into the channels that lead to destruction. As great care should be exercised in the use of the tongue as in the handling of the rudder of a ship at sea. The scriptural rule is,

1 Peter 4

¹¹ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

And in order to speak and say nothing contrary to the Divine oracles, one must be thoroughly familiar with them. We cannot possibly keep ourselves in the right path unless we become acquainted with the word of God.

48. Ancient Writing

Present Truth, August 23, 1894

THROUGH the kindness of the publishers of the Oxford Bible, we are able this week to present two more specimens of the plates contained in its *Helps to the Study of the Bible*. The Publishing of these plates in connection with the Bible, enables the reader to get the benefit, at a trifling expense, of some of the treasures in the British Museum, which enliven the pages of the history of Bible times.

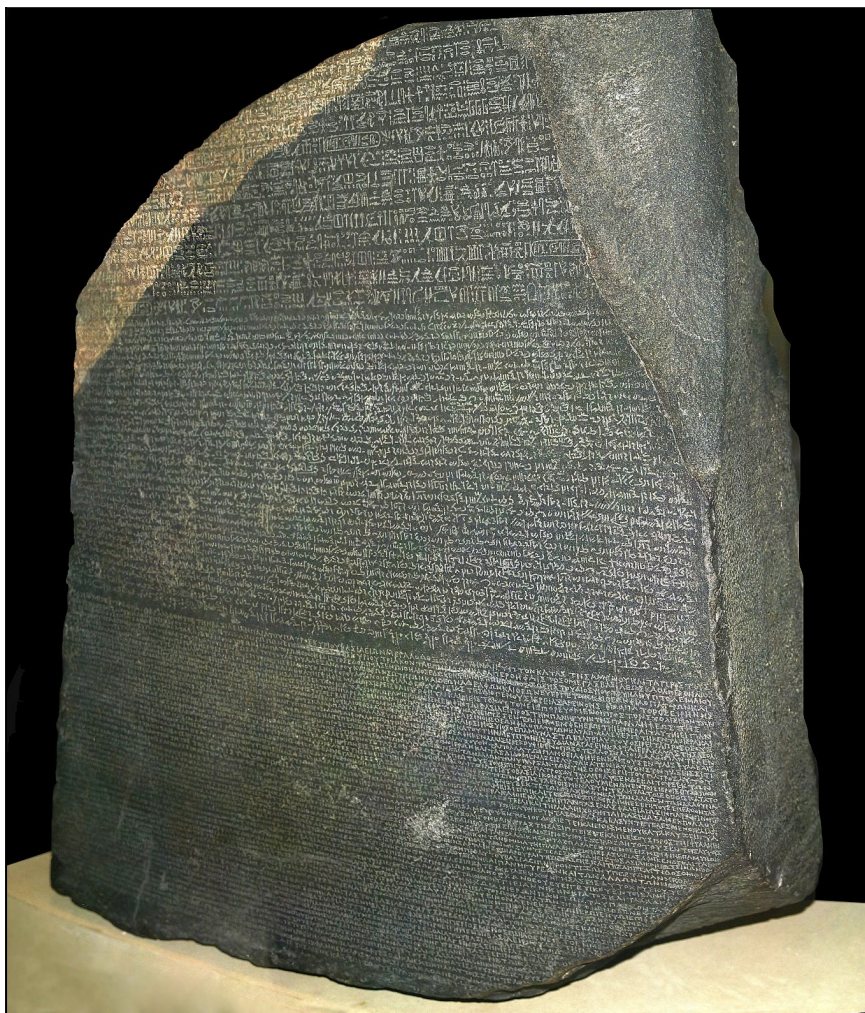
Doubtless many who have heard about how much the discovery of ancient monuments and clay tablets has corroborated the Bible narrative, and has also served as connecting links between different portions of it, have wondered how the inscriptions upon them could be read with any certainty. Some have thought that it is all conjecture; but it is not. The story of how scholars became acquainted with those long-buried records in a language that was forgotten long before the English language existed, is very interesting. Plate III from the Oxford Bible "Helps," which is here given [on the next page], tells a part of the story.

It will be noticed that there are three divisions in the characters upon the "Rosetta Stone." The lowest is in Greek, the middle one is in the "demotic," or writing of the people of Egypt, and the top-most is in hieroglyphics, or the writing of the priests.

Of course scholars could read the Greek writing without much difficulty. Then it was naturally supposed that the other two kinds of writing were the same inscription as the Greek. This proved to be the case. Using the Greek as a key, the others were deciphered, and the value of the different characters was fixed. The picture, it may be necessary to state, is very many times smaller than the stone itself, so that the characters are actually much larger than the illustration.

This stone furnished a key to the Egyptian writing only. It was not too many years later that the Assyrian and Babylonian cunei-

form (wedge-shaped) writing was deciphered, and then many treasures were opened to the world. Many things mentioned in the Bible, which had previously been difficult, were now made clear. Critics had declared that certain names mentioned in the Bible were absolutely wrong, and that no such people had ever existed; but the inscriptions on the monuments and the tablets showed that they had existed, and gave their place in history.



Dr. A. H. Sayce, in *Social Life Among the Assyrians and Babylonians*, says that the Babylonians...

...were essentially a reading and writing people. In spite of the intricacy of their system of writing, with its multitudinous characters, each of which had more than one phonetic value, and might be used to express an idea or a word, books were numerous, and students were many. The books were for the most part written upon clay with a wooden reed or metal stylus, for clay was cheap and plentiful, and easily impressed with the wedge-shaped lines of which the characters were composed.

One of the cylinders is represented in Plate LI. They may be seen in the British Museum in all sizes, from two feet in length to those so small that a dozen might be carried in the pocket. Dr. Sayce says:

The use of clay for writing purposes extended, along with Babylonian culture, to the neighboring populations of the East. In the century before the exodus, recent discoveries have shown that clay libraries existed, and that an active correspondence was carried on by means of clay tablets in all parts of the Oriental world.

The cuneiform system of writing, [says the above writer,] allowed the use of many abbreviations—thanks to its ideographic nature—and the characters were frequently of a very minute size.

As a consequence, a great deal of matter could be written upon a single tablet.

Where it was found impossible to compress a text within the limits of a single tablet, it was continued on a second, a very clever arrangement being adopted in order to facilitate reference. The tablets were called “the first” or “second” of a series, which received its name from the first word or line of the work inscribed upon them, and the last line of the first tablet was repeated at the beginning of the second. In this way the librarian and readers were able without loss of time to refer to any tablet which was required in a particular series or work. Of course the scribes who copied the tablets endeavoured to make each tablet

correspond with what we should call a chapter, so that the several tablets of a series may be described as the successive chapters of a book.

Whole libraries were thus preserved, and the evidence is clear that people read as much in those days as they do now, although it is doubtful if their minds were weakened by so much trash as is now devoured. There were critics that were chiefly noted for their collections of books. Thus in *Judges* 1:11-13 we are told of the capture of Kirjath-Sepher by Othniel, who received Caleb's daughter as a reward. Kirjath-Sepher means "the city of books." It is quite likely that some of these ancient "book towns" may yet be discovered, and so much more light be shed upon the people of the past.

We already know enough, however, to see that education was by no means backward in the old empires of Western Asia. As in Egypt, so too in Babylonia, if not in Assyria, a knowledge of reading and writing was widely spread, books were multiplied, and there were plenty of readers to study them. So far from being illiterate, the ancient civilized East was almost as full of literary activity as is the world of today. The so-called critical judgments that have been passed upon it, begotten of ignorance and prejudice, must be revised in the light of the full knowledge which we now possess.¹³⁷

The Bible says that in the last days...

Daniel 12

⁴ ...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge of the increased.

Many have supposed that this indicates that the last generation will be wiser than any previous generation in the world; but we shall do well to restrain our conceit. The only real wisdom of this or any other age comes from some of the most ancient records of the past. The Bible is full of the perfection of wisdom. It is not the production of an age of ignorance, but it is a revelation from God,

¹³⁷ Sayce, *Social Life Among the Assyrians and Babylonians*, p. 43.

the Source of all wisdom, to a people who were in no degree inferior to the wisest of their time. Dr. Sayce says:

The Israelites in Canaan were surrounded by nations who were in the enjoyment of ancient cultures, and abundant stores of books. There is every reason for believing that the Israelites also shared in the culture of their neighbors, and the literary activity implied. We now know that the Egyptians and Babylonians wrote and read, not only in the time of David and Solomon, but ages before; why should not the Hebrews also have done the same? If the historical authority of the Old Testament Scriptures is to be overthrown, it must be by other arguments than the unwarranted assumption that letters were unknown in the epoch which they claim to record.

And most conclusive all are these words from the one who was...

Acts 7

²² ...learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians:

Deuteronomy 4

⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it.

⁶ Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely, this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

49. What Says the Scripture?

Present Truth, September 13, 1894

Original title: What Saith the Scripture?

THIS question cannot be answered without an appeal to the books of the Old Testament. This fact is made prominent all through the New Testament writings, and especially so in the epistles of Paul. The question raised by the apostle¹³⁸ is as pertinent to our day as it was in his, to an understanding of the truth; and the answer must be the same now as it was then. There is no antagonism, no difference in character, between these two portions of the Bible. The one is not set off against the other, any more than is the upper half of a building set off against the lower half. The statements of the Old Testament constitute the foundation upon which are based the conclusion set forth in the New.

For example, in the 4th chapter of *Romans*, the apostle, speaking of the justification of Abraham and of all the faithful, quotes from:

Genesis 14

⁶ Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;

—and also builds upon statements contained in *Genesis* 17 and 18 and *Psalms* 32. Without the record in *Genesis* the apostle's argument in *Romans* could not have been made; and if the former record be not reliable, the conclusions reached by him are also worthless. The doctrine stated by Paul was not a new one, but one drawn from the writings of Moses and the ancient prophets. If the latter be swept away, the former must also fall: nor can we expect to understand what we read in the New Testament without beginning at the foundation, and learning, "What says the Scripture?" in the Old.

¹³⁸ *Romans* 4:3; *Galatians* 4:30.

50. Nothing Impossible

Present Truth, October 4, 1894

THE story of the flood is now very largely discredited even by many who profess to be Christians. Though they may admit that there was a flood, they do not believe that it covered the whole earth, as the Bible says. They think it impossible. Let us see what that unbelief really involves. How much of the earth's surface is now covered with water? About three-fourths. Who made the sea? The Bible says,

Psalm 95

⁵ The sea is His, and He made it.

Well now, it is a very simple problem. Couldn't He who has covered three-fourths of the earth's surface with water, have very easily covered the other one-fourth with water also? The question answers itself, and shows us that disbelief in the flood, as described in the Bible, means disbelief in God as the Creator and Upholder of the earth.

51. Life in the Word

Present Truth, October 11, 1894

ONE great truth which men need at this day to learn is that there is life in the word of God. This was the lesson that the Lord endeavoured to teach His people of old whom He delivered from Egypt, while they were in the wilderness where those things usually necessary to sustain life could not be had; but they had not faith enough to learn it.

It is stated that the Lord fed them with manna in the desert that they might...

Deuteronomy 8

³ ...know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

It required faith for them, under such circumstances, to know that they were daily receiving all that they needed to perfectly sustain their lives. The appearances were against it, and they had more faith in the appearances than they did in God. They became dissatisfied with the manna, and gave expression to their feelings by weeping and murmuring. They said,

Numbers 11

⁵ Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.

⁶ But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all beside this manna, before our eyes.

Their language intimated that they were on the road to starvation. But what was the truth of the matter? The context shows. The Lord sent quails upon the camp, and...

³² The people stood up all that day and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails.

They had an abundance of strength and life, or they could not have done this. They were without all those things which had

sustained their life in Egypt; yet they lived, and their physical powers were unimpaired.

Hebrews 4 [RV]

¹² The word of God is living, and active.

This is no figure of speech, but a simple statement of the fact which the Israelites proved in the wilderness when the Lord fed them on His word. The word of the Lord is power. And the commandment of the Lord is not given us to be a test of our power, but a measure of His power. The Saviour, speaking of His sacrifice and laying down His life, said,

John 10

¹⁸ No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This *commandment* have I received of my Father.

He might have said,

“This *power* have I received of my Father;”

—it would have meant the same. And we, since we have received commandments from God, which command the fullest and highest perfection, need not look upon them with despair, wondering how we are to attain to the Divine standard, but say in faith,

“This power have I received of my Father.”

52. How Do You Know?

Present Truth, November 8, 1894

HOW do you know that the Bible is the word of God? This is one of the queries put to the Protestant world by Rome. It is one which the reader may profitably put to himself. Doubtless not a few Protestants would find themselves unable to answer it. In a recent lecture in Liverpool a Catholic speaker addressed these questions to Protestants:

How do you know it [the Bible] is the word of God? Who told you it was God's word: your mother, your father, your teacher, your grandfather, your grandmother, the minister of your church?

How many "Protestants" there are who go, if not to their father or grandfather, to their pastor or to some other mortal like themselves, to learn what is the will of the Lord.

We may all know for ourselves that the Bible is the word of the Lord. The Reformers knew it; who told the fact to them? Not Rome; for they did not acknowledge her authority. By that word they were able to discomfit the champions of Rome, and thus they demonstrated to Rome herself the Divine origin of the Scriptures. Had they not known the Bible to be God's word, independently of the authority of Rome, the Reformation would not have been possible. An acknowledgment of Rome's authority in the matter would have barred the way to reform at the outset; for by the same principle which would confer upon Rome authority to declare what is the word of God, she would also be authorized to declare how that word is to be interpreted, and therefore true Protestants do not, as asserted by the aforesaid speaker, receive the Bible "on the authority of the Roman Church." The men who were first known as "Protestants" had entirely renounced the authority of Rome and received the Bible on an infinitely higher authority, before taking the stand which won for them that distinction.

Peter knew the word of God, and by the same means which enabled him to obtain such knowledge, every man may know that word. Peter was a man, mortal and fallible like ourselves. He had no freer or fuller access to the treasures of Divine knowledge than has any fisherman in our land today. When many of Christ's disciples...

John 6

⁶⁶ ...went back and walked no more with Him,

—because of the things which He spoke to them, Peter said in answer to the Saviour's query whether the twelve would also leave Him,

⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

How did Peter know that Christ's words were the words of God? It may be said that he knew because it was God who spoke them; but how did he know that Jesus of Nazareth was God? Had any man told him so? No; for we read in *Matthew* that he had not learned this truth from any human source.

Matthew 16

¹⁵ He said unto them, But whom do you say that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

Neither did flesh and blood reveal to Peter what was the word of God. God in revealing Christ to Peter, revealed to him His word; for Christ was (and is) the Word.

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The Saviour did not ask men to believe His words because it was He that spoke them; but to believe on Him because of His words and His works. The latter were the evidences of the former, and not the former of the latter. Peter knew and said that Jesus had the words of eternal life, before he said,

John 6

⁶⁹ We believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God.

The word of God is its own evidence; for God is in it, and His word contains His power; and therefore all that God himself could do to convince a person of the truth, His word can do. And when that word comes to us, if our hearts are open to receive it, we know that it is the word of God. We know it because:

Hebrews 4

¹² 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.

He to whom flesh and blood alone, whether in the form of a pope or a pastor or any other man, has revealed that the Bible is the word of God, does not know it at all.

53. Conferred Not With Flesh

Present Truth, November 8, 1894

THE Apostle, writing of his experience when the will of God was first revealed to him, says:

Galatians 1

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace,

¹⁶ To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, and immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

But how few there are who, when placed in a similar position, follow his example. For God is pleased to reveal His Son in every person, this being necessary to the salvation of each one, as much so as in the case of Paul. The person in whom Jesus Christ is revealed, is saved, and only by that means can salvation come.

But how many there are who when God speaks to them and makes known His will, that He may reveal His Son in them, do exactly the opposite to that which was done by Paul. Their testimony would be,

“Immediately I did confer with flesh and blood.”

Immediately when God by His Spirit had opened to them the Scriptures, and made known to them His will, they conferred with their relatives and friends, or with their minister, to decide what they had better do about it. And these persons told them not to be foolish or fanatical and not to make themselves different from other people, for the Bible isn't to be taken so literally as to require any such thing as that; and they listened to the counsel of flesh and blood, and draw back from the counsel of the Omniscient.

Isaiah 48

¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord your God, which teaches you by the way that you should go.

¹⁸ O that you had hearkened to my commandments! then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.

Luke 19

⁴² If you had known, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes.

⁴⁴ ...because you knew not the time of your visitation.

Let not this lament be said over you. The one safe Counselor in all matters of duty is the Lord himself.



54. Fanciful Bible Study

Present Truth, November 15, 1894

HERE we have a company of people gathered together, calling themselves a Bible class. A text of Scripture is read, and the leader asks the members what they think of it.

“What is your opinion?”

—and,

“Let us hear your mind,”

—he says to one and another. So they go about, each one telling what he thinks the text means, until they either arrive at some common ground, or the leader thinks that it is not profitable to carry the “investigation” any further.

“Studying the Bible,” did you say? Certainly not. They imagine that they are, but they are only studying themselves. Their “investigation” is simply an investigation of their own minds, and not of the Bible. They meet and “exchange ideas,” as it is called, although it is rare that any real exchange is made, since each usually becomes more fixed in his own opinion; and the Bible is used as a support for their conjectures.

Take another class, or the same class under other circumstances. The Scripture is read, and the leader proceeds to tell what it means. The members of the class may have been asked their opinion, but the leader closes the discussion with an *ex cathedra*¹³⁹ utterance. If he be a man of repute, the class hang on his words, noting them down carefully for future reference, so that they may know what they ought to believe concerning this portion of Scripture. This also is called Bible study, but it is simply the study of a man.

¹³⁹ *Ex cathedra* is a Latin phrase, meaning “from the chair.” The phrase was originally applied to decisions made by Popes from their thrones. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, a Pope speaking *ex cathedra* on issues of faith or morals is infallible.

The same disposition is in men today that prevailed in the days of the schoolmen. Speaking of the time of Wycliffe, Wiley says:

Philosophy then lay in guesses rather than in facts. Whatever could be known from having been put before man in the facts of nature or the doctrines of Revelation, was deemed not worth further investigation. It was too humble an occupation, to observe and deduce. In the pride of his genius, man turned away from a field lying at his feet, and plunged boldly into a region where, having no data to guide him and no ground for solid footing, he could learn really nothing. From this region of vague speculation the explorer brought back only the images of his own creating, and, dressing up these fancies as facts, he passed them off as knowledge.

To read the Bible, and to search it carefully to find out just what God has said, is still thought scarcely worthy the name of Bible study. Men look into their own minds, and think that thus they are studying God. This is of the very essence of the Papacy. It is the putting of the human above the Divine. It was thus that manifold errors crept into the Christian church, and it is thus that they are perpetuated, and new ones are devised.

There is in many men an almost insane desire to discover something new and startling; to propound some new and startling theory. They are struck by the sound of certain words in the Bible, and without paying any attention to the connection, they forthwith take their "position," and, if possible, rush into print with a statement of the result of their "study," which is only a demonstration of the fact that they have not studied at all.

"The right of private judgment," against which Roman Catholics declaim so much, is grossly abused. God has given to every man reason, and expects each one to think for himself. If He had designed that the priest or the preacher should do the thinking for the laboring man, He would have given all the brains to the former, and none to the latter. But to every man He has given brains, as an indication that each one is expected to think for himself.

But God is still supreme. The fact that no man should be lord of another, does not destroy the fact that God is Lord. The only reason why I should not go to another to learn what God means, is that man's mind is so much less than that of God that he will certainly fail when he tries to interpret the mind of God. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can readily interpret the word of God to men. But when I say that I will not take the opinions of another, but follow my own opinions, I am no better off, for I am a human as well as they. I am simply making myself pope, and saying that my judgment is better than that of any other man.

Psalm 50

⁶ God is Judge himself.

The right of private judgment is not a right to set one's self up against God.

James 4

⁷ Submit yourselves to God.

Let God teach you by His own Spirit, through His own word. And let the human teachers work be that of leading his class to the fountain whence he has drunk, that they may drink for themselves. Let God form the judgment, and direct the reason. We are not to put our ideas and construction upon the word, but to meditate upon the word until the light and truth that are in it reveal themselves to us, and mould us.

1895



1. How to Find Strength

Present Truth, January 10, 1895

Daniel 10

¹⁹ And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened.

SO WROTE the prophet Daniel in describing a vision given him by the side of one of the rivers of Babylonia. For three weeks Daniel had been mourning, having eaten no “pleasant bread” nor tasted meat or wine.¹⁴⁰ He was mourning and praying on account of the sins of his people and the captivity into which they had been brought. He felt not only for himself but for the multitude of his nation in the land of their captivity, and for the temple of his God, which was lying in ruins in a far-off land. The weight of so much trouble pressed heavily upon him, and in his sorrow he turned for help to the Lord. He talked with the Lord, and the Lord, by His angel, talked with him; and the prophet received strength and light.

The course of Daniel and his trouble is the course for us. Human sympathy is comforting and helpful, but the tale of sorrow is rarely lightened by being poured into human ears, and the burden of each is a heavy one of itself; but only tell the trouble to the Lord, tell it in faith, and the burden lightens at once. Talk to God as to a Father, and He will talk to you. The Lord is no respecter of persons.¹⁴¹ He is as willing to talk with any one of us as He was to talk with Daniel.

Although Daniel was “greatly beloved”¹⁴² by the Lord, the words which were spoken to him did not relate only to him, but were spoken in reality to us who live long after his day, when the prophecies he wrote were to be fulfilled. The favors which were seemingly bestowed upon Daniel and upon all the prophets, in the communications given them from God, were in reality bestowed upon us.

¹⁴⁰ *Daniel* 10:3.

¹⁴¹ *Acts* 10:34.

¹⁴² *Daniel* 9:23; 10:11, 19.

This is what Peter tells us in his first epistle, when speaking of the prophets and holy men of old, he says,

1 Peter 1

¹² Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

The Lord had us in mind when He sent mighty angels from heaven with communications to His chosen prophets and apostles. Can we say, then, that we are not “greatly beloved” as well as they? Has God not given to us as much as He gave to them, and will He not do for us what He did for them? We are assured that having given us His Son He will with Him...

Romans 8

³² ...freely give us all things,

—and that...

Acts 17

²⁵ He gives to all life and breath and all things.

In talking to the holy men of old, God was also talking to us; for,

Romans 15

⁴ Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

God was so anxious to talk with us, for our learning and comfort, He spoke to us long before we were born. And upon our entrance into the world, we find His words waiting for us, to give us the hope and strength and comfort with which they are filled.

When we come to the Scriptures, we come to God, and in them He talks with us, as truly as He ever talked with human flesh; and, unlike the words of man, His words are ever fresh, applying

always to the present hour and our present circumstances. God courts an audience with us, and His time and place are always ready. He knows all our weakness and our sorrow, and so has invited us to come to Him, that we may find hope and comfort, and say as did Daniel,

Daniel 10

¹⁹ When He had spoken unto me, I was strengthened.



2. Ice Age Doubts

Present Truth, January 31, 1895

UNDER this appropriate heading the *Chronicle* mentions a lecture recently delivered in London by A. W. Clayden, M.A., on the subject of the conflicting theories which have been put forth to account for the great “glacial epoch” of geological literature. It was stated that:

The glacial period and its problems have perplexed the scientific mind greatly during the past thirty or forty years, and we appear to be no nearer a satisfactory answer at the end of the controversy than at the beginning.

The Astronomical theory accounts for the supposed epoch upon the hypothesis of...

...recurrent glacial periods shifting about alternatively from one pole to another every 10,500 years.

But this we are told has been practically disproved by the investigations of geologists. This theory fixes the “ice age” at 80,000 years in the past: but on the other hand equally scientific evidence gathered from the gradual recession of Niagara Falls...

...puts it at not more than 10,000.

The astronomical theory assumes a great and general fall in temperature at that remote period, a rising from some peculiar...

...position of the earth in regard to the sun;

—but again science comes and contradicts this by asserting that even had such a coldness arisen in the relations of the sun with his supposed offspring, this would not suffice to account for the glaciers; for in some of the coldest regions of the earth, as in parts of Siberia, glaciers never form. Not only cold, but a marked elevation of the earth is necessary; and hence the meteorological theory is propounded, which assumes an elevation of a great part of

the earth's surface 3,000 or 4,000 feet above its present level, into the perpetual snow region of the atmosphere. But geology deals this theory a knockout blow by declaring that it finds no evidence of such an elevation of the affected regions. It does find, however,

...some evidence that Central America had once been submerged;

—and it is deemed...

...quite possible upon this hypothesis to make out that there would have been such a disturbance of aerial and ocean currents...

—therefrom as would account for a glacial epoch over North America and Northwest Europe. In the face of all this, we are told, the actual existence of such an epoch is...

...the only well-established fact.

But there is no evidence to support the “well-established fact.” The scattered boulders, corroded surfaces of earth, and pulverized *debris* of rock are found, but the existence of such things proves nothing as to the unknown agency. A man, let us suppose, is suspected of murder; no one saw him do the deed, but it is evident that he had the ability to do it. The body has been found, with the marks of violence upon it; and different theories are put forth as to how the suspected person might have done the deed. All the theories that can be thought of contradict one another, and not one is sufficient to account for the supposed crime; whereupon the judge solemnly declares that in view of all that has been produced upon the case, the one well-established fact is that the accused person committed the murder! What would be thought of such proceedings in a court of law?

The word of God declares that some thousands of years ago, in the days of Noah, there was a flood over all the earth.

Genesis 7

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month,

the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Today, however, men see no evidences of a flood, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters burst forth with indescribable violence from the bowels of the earth, to combine their destructive power with the fury of the storm above. They see only evidences of a “glacial epoch,” by which the record of God’s word is contradicted. Peter tells us that...

2 Peter 3

⁶ ...the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

Who can imagine a storm in which a world would perish? What imagination can picture such terrific violence of the elements? Who can compute the energy and results of the forces that were then at work? Could the human mind grasp in its nature and details a catastrophe so stupendous, it would be perceived to be fully adequate to account for all the phenomena from which men deduce so many theories contradictory to the Mosaic record. People who are so incredulous to accept the reasonable statements of God’s word, are always credulous enough to accept the most absurd and unreasonable theories that originate in the mind of man.

3. Interpretation

Present Truth, February 28, 1895

“**I**NTERPRETATION,” as applied to the Scripture, means the art of attempting to reconcile the precepts of the Lord with the practices of men.

4. The Bounds of Heathenism

Present Truth, March 7, 1895

THESE bounds are set by the word of God; that word alone defines what is heathenism and what is not. Only by that word can be determined whether the principles by which our lives are governed are heathen, or whether they are Christian.

Micah 6

⁶ Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Doubtless we would not think of presuming to worship God by such acts as our spirit enumerated; yet what we do offer Him as worship may fall quite as far short of that worship which is in spirit and in truth.

The worship referred to by the prophet is heathenism. Heathen worship is not inconsistent with the retention of forms and ceremonies instituted by God, or of those which are approximate to them. God instituted sacrifices as an essential feature of His worship, and it was doubtless from these that all other sacrificial ceremonies were borrowed. The heathen looked no further in their worship than the sacrifice itself, and attributed to it all the virtue of obedience to the Divine instructions. It was this that made them heathen. They lost *faith*, which looked beyond the form and ceremony to the Lamb of God, in whom alone there was virtue for mankind. Heathenism is simply worship not of faith.

This being gone, and human reasoning and speculation having taken its place, perversion of the forms of worship followed as a matter of course, in proportion as the human intellect endeavoured to give them a meaning. God came to be regarded as a being to be appeased by the shedding of blood, or—by what was

held as its equivalent—the taking of life. Men thought to purchase His favor, and measured the probability of success by the value of the sacrifice which they offered. And thus it came to pass that they offered the fruit of their bodies—their own children—for the sin of their souls. They made their sons and their daughters to...

2 Kings 17

¹⁷ ...pass through the fire,

—or sacrificed them upon the burning altar.¹⁴³ It was the most valuable offering they knew how to make, and as such, in their view, the most acceptable. And that view was but the logical outgrowth of the human mind, working upon a system of worship without faith. And thus the very sacrifices by which they thought to atone for sin only added tenfold to it.

The word of God declares,

Romans 14

²³ ...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Without faith there is no real sight of the Lamb of God, and without the sight of Him all forms of worship lose their meaning. Then come in human reasoning, philosophy, and tradition, by which the spiritual sight is utterly darkened, and the commandments of God made of none effect. It was thus that the Jews had become actual heathen in the days of Christ; it is thus that many have become heathen in our own day who imagine themselves Christians. Every individual can determine his own position and the character of his religion by an examination of God's word. That word is the rule of faith, and...

²³ ...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

It is faith alone that sets the bounds to heathenism.

¹⁴³ 2 Kings 3:27.

5. The Real Question

Present Truth, March 28, 1895

WHEN people take their stand to live in harmony with the word of God, even though opposed by popular customs and beliefs, and by the law of the land, they are often asked,

“What can you do?”

And because of the evident hopelessness of the prospect for such a change, they seem to consider themselves justified in disregarding the Divine Word, as if it were either impossible or useless to do otherwise while a contrary attitude is sustained by the majority.

This, however, is not the question to be considered. The truth of God does not concern itself with questions of this kind. God never conducts a work of reform in the earth with any reference to the practicability of gaining the “support” of popular customs and beliefs, and the alliance of human law. His work does not need any such support, and Christians cannot expect any such change to take place. It is God who supports the world, and all living things therein; and therefore no power of men can give any support to Him, any more than a child in the arms of its father can support that father.

Christians cannot change the laws, customs and governments of the world. They can do nothing. They know this; and it is for that very reason that they do not hesitate to take their stand on the word of God, though all the powers of earth may be arrayed against them. If they thought otherwise—if they believed there was some saving power in the arm of flesh—they would seek first to gain that power by the usual means through which it is obtained. But the Christian belief is God’s word, and that word says,

Philippians 3

³ We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

It also says,

Psalm 146

³ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help.

Put confidence in God—*no* confidence in the flesh—this is the very essence of the Christian's faith; and by that faith he lives.

The real question is:

“What are you going to do?”

It is not a question of governments, organizations, or majorities, but for individuals. God does not speak to organizations. He does not purpose to save governments or corporations. He speaks to individuals, separately and alone, without reference to any other person or thing. And He is now speaking to you, and declaring to the world His eternal truth. Do you imagine yourself outside the controversy, in the position of a mere spectator? If so, be warned in time; there is no such position, and that which seems so is a delusion and a snare. The work of God, the truth of God, concern no one more than it does you. He has spoken His word. He is causing it to be proclaimed throughout the earth; and He calls on all men equally to hear and obey it that they may live for ever. And the question—the only question—is,

“What are you going to do?”

6. The Light of the World

Present Truth, April 11, 1895

Original title: Front Page

WHEN we turn our backs upon the cross, we walk in the darkness of our own shadows; for the cross is light.

Men become atheists only when they try to comprehend infinite truths with finite minds. The apostle says,

1 Corinthians 2

¹⁶ We have the mind of Christ.

With that mind we can grasp the truths which God has revealed. That they are not grasped is not the fault of God, but of men who prefer their own natural minds to the mind God has given them in Christ. We see truth clearly only when we see...

Ephesians 4

²¹ ...the truth as it is in Jesus.

He is the light of this world, and in that light truth appears in no uncertain outlines. Those who will not look to Christ, cannot expect to know the truth.

7. Superstition

Present Truth, April 18, 1895

THERE is nothing so favorable to the development of superstition as ignorance of the Word of God.

Superstition is ignorance. It is a belief of that which is not true, existing in the place of that knowledge which the Word of God supplies. The man who believes the Bible—the man of faith, who knows what the Bible says and accepts what it says as the truth—is never superstitious.

Ignorance of God's Word has created a vast realm of the "supernatural," people with phantasms and vagaries of every sort. There is a proper role of the supernatural, upon which light is cast by revelation from God; but it is not this fact that is responsible for superstition. On the contrary, revelation is the special safeguard against it. Superstition comes entirely from ignorance of the revelation.

From a priest-ridden part of Ireland there has recently come news of such a display of superstition as might only be expected from some of the inmost recesses of "darkest Africa." A sick woman was taken by her husband, some of the neighbors assisting, and deliberately held over a fire till she was fatally burned, to ascertain if she were not a witch; this being the climax to other ceremonies for "exorcising" the evil spirits supposed to be in her. The poor woman having failed to disappear up the chimney, thus making a witch-like exit from the scene, the perpetrators of this dreadful act decided that she was not a witch, and buried her like an ordinary mortal. The shocking occurrence is perfectly compatible with ignorance of the Word of God. Rome has suppressed the Bible where she has had full sway, and gross superstition is the natural result. But Rome's suppression of the inspired Word is no worse than that suppression of it which comes from willful disregard or indifference.

The proper and essential place for the Word of God is in the heart. It gives no benefit to the person who has it simply in his hand. Disbelief or indifference will do for the Protestant what priestly vigilance does for the poor souls by whom God's word is never seen.

There are none of us beyond the reach of superstition. Let God's Word be banished from the heart, and the door is open to the entrance of the worst fanaticism. The Lord has told us this in plain words.

2 Thessalonians 2

¹¹ For this cause, [we read,] God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

"The truth," is the Word of God,¹⁴⁴ and the only reason people will not believe it when it is presented to them is that they have pleasure in unrighteousness.

When we know God, let us glorify Him as God by confessing that every word from Him is true; lest like the heathen of old we become vain in our imaginations, and our foolish hearts be darkened.¹⁴⁵

8. Food, Not Medicine

Present Truth, April 25, 1895

Original title: Front Page

THE Word of God was not given to man to be taken in homeopathic doses. It is not medicine, it is food, of which no one need ever be afraid of taking too much.

¹⁴⁴ *John* 17:17.

¹⁴⁵ *Romans* 1:21.

9. Why Men Err

Present Truth, April 25, 1895

THE reason why there is so much religious error in the world was stated by our Saviour when He answered the objection of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection.

Matthew 22

²⁹ You do err, [He said,] not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

In *Mark* it is recorded that He told them they did...

Mark 12

²⁷ ...greatly err.

The Bible was not given to supplement the knowledge and wisdom of man. Man has no wisdom, except in his own eyes. All the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

To them that perish, the preaching of the cross of Christ is foolishness. The mind of man, therefore, can do nothing else but err in its relation to spiritual truth. The person who thinks the wisdom of God was given to supplement his own, will as surely err as did the Sadducees; and the error, like theirs, will be great.

The objection which the Sadducees raised against the resurrection is a fair illustration of those objections which the wisdom of man raises against the truthfulness of God's Word. The Word is rejected because in its light the far-fetched suppositions and speculations of man's mind will not appear beautiful and consistent. But all such efforts of the human mind are useless, because it does

not know the power of God; and man does not know the power of God until he knows the Scriptures, for God's power is the power of His Word, and the Scriptures are His Word.

What man is prepared to say that the Bible does not mean just what it says—that certain statements made in that Word concerning what is to be, cannot be true? Only the man who knows that God's power is not sufficient for its accomplishments; and this no man can know, for it is not true. To know God's power we must know the Scriptures, and we do not know the Scriptures unless they are to us the revelation of the power and wisdom of God. The further men turn aside from the Word, the deeper must they plunge into error.



10. The “Up-to-Date” Pulpit

Present Truth, April 25, 1895

A WELL-KNOWN clergyman has drawn up in one of the *Reviews* a statement of the attitude which the new pulpit must assume in order to minister to clever people of this advanced age. It is instructive to see it plainly stated, as it marks the progress of the popular movement which is causing the old-fashioned infidel critic of the Bible a loss of his occupation.

The Old Pulpit said: “The Bible is the word of God.”

The New Pulpit says: “The word of God is in the Bible.”

The Old Pulpit said: “The Bible is an inspired history.”

The New Pulpit says: “The Bible is the history of an inspired people.”

The Old Pulpit said: “The Bible is infallibly inspired.”

The New Pulpit says: “The Bible is inspired, but not infallible.”

The Old Pulpit said: “I believe in the resurrection of the body.”

The New Pulpit adds: “I believe in the survival of the ego and the continuity of the individual in some suitable, though at present unknown, form, under some suitable, though at present unknown, conditions, and so forth.”

Luke 18

⁸ When the Son of man comes shall He find faith on the earth?

As the Word is the word of salvation, and as “It is written” is the one defense against the power against the power of sin, it is not strange that Satan’s attacks have always been directed against the Word, nor that when...

Revelation 12

¹² ...he knows that he has but a short time,

–he should specially work to undermine the Scriptures in the last days. Over against this statement of the position of the New

Pulpit, let us place the apostle's declaration in that epistle which warns against latter-day perils and conditions:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 4

¹ I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

² Preach the Word...

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...

⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

⁵ But watch you.

11. Continual Progress

Present Truth, May 2, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just as the shining light, that shines more and more on to the perfect day.

IT WAS in harmony with this fact that the Apostle Paul prayed:

Colossians 1

¹⁰ That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

The Christian life is a race, and the watchword is, Progress. A race in which there is no advance is simply not a race. So if a professed Christian does not...

2 Peter 3

¹⁸ ...grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

—he is not living the Christian life.

The Christian life is also a school, in which Christ is the Teacher. He says,

Matthew 11

²⁸ Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.

Christ says of himself,

Isaiah 50 [RV]

⁴ The Lord has given me the tongue of them that are taught,...He wakens morning by morning, He wakens my ear to hear as they that are taught.

The disciple is not greater than his Lord. Therefore the man who determines that he will never believe or practice anything more than what he believed and did when he was first converted,

deliberately resolves never to live the Christian life. It is the same as though a boy should determine never to learn anything more than he learned the first day he went to school.

The commandments of God are “exceeding broad.”¹⁴⁶ The fact that we are familiar with any portion of Scripture, is no evidence that we know all that there is in it. The riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God are unsearchable,¹⁴⁷ so that nobody can ever say that he knows it all. He may know that what he does see is the truth, but he knows nothing as he ought to know it, if he does not know that there is “much more” to learn. Let us therefore all pray,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.



¹⁴⁶ *Psalm 119:96.*

¹⁴⁷ *Romans 11:33.*

12. What Is Truth?

Present Truth, May 9, 1895

Original title: Front Page

2 Thessalonians 2

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

WHAT is truth? That is the question that Pilate asked Jesus.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, like too many others, he did not wait to receive an answer. But we may hear the answer in Christ's prayer for His disciples:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your Word is truth.

But Christ himself is the Word, and He is...

John 14

⁶ ...the way, the truth, and the life.

1 Corinthians 1

³⁰ [He is] made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.

So being sanctified through the truth is being sanctified through Christ, as He again says of His disciples:

John 17 [margin]

¹⁹ I sanctify myself, that they also might be truly sanctified.

Christ is the Word; He is the truth; and He sanctifies all who believe Him. The Bible is also the Word of God, because the Spirit of Christ was in the men who wrote, testifying through them, and because the Scriptures testify of Christ.¹⁴⁹ It is the truth, and it sanctifies, because Christ is in the Word, and believers find Him there. When Moses by the Spirit said that the Word is not far off,

¹⁴⁸ *John* 18:38.

¹⁴⁹ *John* 5:39.

that we should need some one to go to heaven and bring it down, or to the deep and bring it up, that we might do it,¹⁵⁰ he meant Christ, as we learn from *Romans* 10:6-7. Christ cannot be separated from the Inspired Word.

With these facts in mind, we may form a more correct idea of what it is to believe the truth and to be sanctified by it. It is a very common thing for people to get the idea that “the truth” consists in certain facts or points of doctrine, which have been set forth in the creeds and formulas of “the church.” Accordingly some men will hold to one set of ideas as “the truth,” and others to still different ones, just as they may regard one or another denomination as “the church.”

The ancient Jews “limited the Holy One of Israel;”¹⁵¹ and that is just what is done by those who hold such narrow views of “the truth.” The truth does not consist in a few points of doctrine, nor in anything that can be formulated by man, but in “all the fullness of God,”¹⁵² which is in Christ. It consists in...

Matthew 4

⁴ ...every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,

—for all Scripture is profitable,¹⁵³ and there is enough of it to make men perfect,

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Only those will be lost who...

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ ...received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Truth itself must be loved and received. It is not our ideas of truth that will save us, but the truth as it is in Jesus. Not our thoughts but God’s thoughts are the truth. We have no business

¹⁵⁰ *Deuteronomy* 30:11-14.

¹⁵¹ *Psalms* 78:41.

¹⁵² *Ephesians* 3:19.

¹⁵³ *2 Timothy* 3:16.

to think anything different from what God's Word says. It is to direct our thoughts. And since Christ cannot be divided, and partly believed and partly rejected, but must be accepted as a whole, so we must not expect to find sanctification in accepting some things that are true, and rejecting others. He who is satisfied with anything less than the whole truth, will at last find himself with no truth at all.



13. Making Haste

Present Truth, May 16, 1895

IT IS a grand thing sometimes to be in haste. David said,

Psalm 119

⁶⁰ I made haste, and delayed not to keep your commandments.

And again,

³² I will run in the way of your commandments.

This language was inspired by the Holy Spirit, showing that God is pleased to have people go fast when they are in the right way.

Going to Extreme

The extremity is simply the end. Going to the extreme is simply going as far as one can go. Ordinarily people are not afraid of going to extremes. For instance, when they start to go to a certain place they are not satisfied unless they get fully there; to stop short of the extreme distance is to them a very mean¹⁵⁴ position. So when one starts on the road to heaven, he ought not to be satisfied to come short of God. Therefore he ought not to be afraid of going to extremes in the Word of God, that is, of going to the full length of the Word. It is impossible to err in the way of going too far in the Word. That which is usually called going to extremes in the Word is in reality the turning aside from the Word, which is a different thing altogether.

Faith vs. Fanaticism

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Fanaticism comes by not hearing the Word, or by not heeding what is heard. It is impossible for any man to be fanatical so long as he keeps within the limits of God's Word. The fact that one *be-*

¹⁵⁴ PP Editor's note: This is a less common use of the word "mean," and the definition is: "low," or "contemptible."

gins with the Word does not insure him against fanaticism, for he may depart from it or substitute his own ideas and feelings for it. David said,

Psalm 119

³¹ I have stuck unto your testimonies.

Therein is safety.



14. Directions for Hearing

Present Truth, May 30, 1895

Original title: Front Page

Mark 4:24

Mark 4

²⁴ Take heed what you hear.

THESE are the words of the Saviour, and they are as important now as when first uttered. But what shall we hear? This is answered by the directions as to what we are not to hear:

Proverbs 19

²⁷ Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge.

Thus we are to hear the words of knowledge. And what words are they? Again we read:

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The words of the Lord, therefore, are the words of knowledge.

Colossians 2

³ In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

He speaks the words of knowledge, because He speaks only the words of God.

John 3

³⁴ He whom God has sent speaks the words of God.

Therefore the word of God concerning Christ is,

Luke 9

³⁵ Hear Him.

His words are God's words; and we are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. All other words are worse than useless.

But there is still another exhortation as important as the other. It is this:

Luke 8

¹⁸ Take heed therefore how you hear.

A man may hear the right thing, and yet not be profited, because he does not hear in the right way. How then shall we hear? In the first place, we should hear with gladness. The angels in heaven hearken to the voice of God's word:

Psalms 103

²⁰ Bless the Lord, you His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, *hearkening unto the voice of His word.*

They listen attentively, lest any word should escape them. In the second place, they listen for the purpose of obeying:

²⁰ [They] *do His commandments*, hearkening unto the voice of His word.

Whoever listens in this way will have no difficulty in understanding what he hears; for...

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know the doctrine.

Lastly, it is important that we hear so attentively that we do not forget. There are some from whom the word is snatched away as soon as it is heard.¹⁵⁵ Then it does them no good.

1 John 2

⁵ But whoso keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

That word "keep" means "to hold." We are to *hold* the word. Where? In our hearts. Let it remain there so that its life will permeate every portion of the being, and it will make you...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

¹⁵⁵ *Matthew 13:4.*

15. Daniel and His Critics

Present Truth, May 30, 1895

“The new skepticism ought to be rational.”

THIS is a remark made by the *Freeman's* reviewer of Dr. Farrar's new book on *Daniel*. After some scathing criticism of the feeble argument, and of the readiness with which the author throws away the Bible history because some parts of it have not been found in the Assyrian monuments, not five per cent of which have been deciphered, the reviewer says:

The linguistic difficulties of his position seem to me insuperable. The language of the book, with its Chaldee quotations, indicate the age in which Daniel wrote, and they are certainly not what would be used by a Jew of the second century before Christ. Had it been written 184 BC, it would probably have been written, like the books of the Apocrypha, in Greek.

Dr. Farrar's argument, that no mention of Belshazzar's disgraceful end has been found in the Assyrian monuments, may call for a remark, inasmuch as we frequently hear a similar reason urged with regard to other portions of Scripture. It must not be forgotten that as yet a mere fraction of these monuments have been deciphered, and of those the translation is very uncertain. But we should not expect to find memorials of national disgrace. Already some cases have been brought to light which prove that monumental lying is not a modern art, and kings have erased inscriptions and added others to suit popular opinion or their own glory.

When the New Zealander in the coming age walks from the ruins of London to examine the inscriptions remaining among the overturned stones of our great city he will look in vain for any mention of the terrible military disgraces our country suffered in the reign of George III and our shameful discomfiture in America. Nations do not inscribe the disgraceful portions of their history

on stone. We have all heard of the changed inscriptions on the Monument of the Great Fire of London.

But apart from this, is there not something deficient in the spirit that looks to pagan monuments for its arguments? No doubt there are difficulties in the Old Testament Apocalypse, difficulties which humble reason and awaken faith. But the archdeacon's method of dealing with them is like amputating an arm to cure a chilblain.¹⁵⁶



¹⁵⁶ Chilblains: a medical condition in which damage occurs to capillary beds in the skin, most often in the hands or feet, when blood perfuses into the nearby tissue, resulting in redness, itching, inflammation, and possibly blisters. (Wikipedia). It's caused by exposure to damp air that's cold but not freezing. (Mayo Clinic)

16. Afraid of Moses

Present Truth, June 20, 1895

MANY people seem to have a special antipathy to Moses, and to anything that pertains to him. Let anything be quoted from the first books of the Bible, and they will cry out,

“Oh, that’s in the law of Moses!”

—or,

“Moses wrote that.”

Well, what if he did? Does that diminish its value? Why not as well say when the Psalms are read,

“O, David wrote that!”

—or object to other prophecies because Isaiah or Jeremiah wrote them? Why is there not as much reason in objecting to things quoted from the epistles of the New Testament because they were written by Paul, or Peter, or James, or John? Was Moses inferior to these men? Was he less favored of God?

Hear what the Lord said:

Numbers 12

⁶ If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

⁷ My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house.

⁸ With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.

Deuteronomy 34

¹⁰ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

Christ testified that to disbelieve Moses was to disbelieve in Him.

John 5

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

Moses wrote of Christ. He wrote of the sacrifice of Christ, of justification through faith in His blood, of the coming of the Lord, of the resurrection of the dead, of eternal life, and of the glorious reign of the saints in the kingdom of God. Let us beware, lest, in speaking disparagingly of Moses, we be found rejecting the Master, of whom he testified, and whose reproach he suffered.

17. Drawing Out the Sweet

Present Truth, June 20, 1895

IT IS not the bee's touching on the flowers that gathers the honey, but her abiding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on divine truth, that will prove the choicest, strongest Christian.

18. Carrying the Light

Present Truth, July 4, 1895

WHO has not seen a little child attempt to grasp a handful of sunshine? It would close its hand in the sunlight, and would manifest great surprise when it found, on opening its hand in the shade, that the sunshine had escaped. We are amused at the simplicity of the child, unmindful of the fact that we ourselves often manifest less wisdom in a similar case of far more importance.

For instance, we have learned that the Word of God is light. We perhaps believe that if we only have that Word we shall have light; and so we make attempts to seize and hold it. When the Word is spoken with great clearness, people often jot down the thoughts in their note books, and make a special note of the text of Scripture that was referred to in the hope of carrying the light away with them. But when they have gone to their homes, and have opened their books, they are surprised to find that the light does not shine forth. They thought to show the light to their friends, but it has fled even as the sunshine from the hands of the little child. This time we are not amused, for the case is too serious for amusement.

In each case the desire was most laudable. To “catch the sunshine” is one of the most necessary things. To wish to carry it to others is a blessed thought. The child does catch and carry the sunshine, but in a different manner from what it thinks. Living in the bright sunlight it takes up the life-giving rays in its blood, and they are manifested in rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, sturdy limbs, and a cheerful spirit. It carries the sunshine in its life, and carries it to others too, because...

Proverbs 17

²² A merry heart does good like a medicine.

The difference between a child who lives in the sunshine and one who lives altogether in the shade is manifest to every one

who sees them. The child of the shade cannot by an occasional run into the sunlight gather up a supply of sunshine in its hands and pockets to distribute to others. There is no other way of carrying sunshine than in the blood.

Even so it is with the light of the Word of God. We cannot carry it in our hands, nor in our pockets, or even in our mouths. Light is life and there is no way of carrying it except in the life.

Proverbs 4

²³ Out of the heart are the issues of life;

—and we are told,

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ These words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.

Colossians 3

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

When the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness are received and absorbed into the life, there will be no difficulty in carrying them to others.

Of Christ it is said,

John 1

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The life of Christ is the only true light, for He says,

John 8

¹² I am the light of the world.

Since there is no light except the light of Christ, it is most evident that no man can carry that light except by having the life itself. So Jesus says,

John 8

¹² He that follows me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

We may...

1 John 1

⁷ ...walk in the light, as He is in the light,

–and not only so, but we ourselves may be lights. Indeed, we are expected to be lights.

Ephesians 5

⁸ For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of light.

Also,

Philippians 2

¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

¹⁵ That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

The sun shines without an effort, because it is light. Christ shines because He is light itself. His life is light, and His word is life. Therefore whoever receives that word into his heart and life, will shine with the same light, and with no more conscious effort than the sun itself makes.

Matthew 5

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

19. Reading vs. Study

Present Truth, July 4, 1895

THERE are many more Bibles in the world than there are readers of the Bible. And there are more readers than students of the Bible. Some one has pertinently said:

It is not much good just reading the Bible. The Word itself does not say anything, that I can remember, about reading it. But it says a great deal about *searching the Scriptures*. And it says a great deal more about *meditating* on them. I do not know much about pearls, but I have heard that they come from the bottom of the sea. Now, we come up and look at the great stretch of water, and say, "This is where the pearls come from," and we take up the water and get nothing but bubbles of foam. But David comes along, and he dives down under the water, and brings up a wonderful pearl; and so he says, "It's more to be desired than gold." Reading skims, and cannot find anything but what floats on top; meditation dives down deep and finds pearls.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Mark Guy Pearse, *Daniel Quorm, and His Religious Notions*, Chapter XIII, 1876.

20. They Do Not Agree

Present Truth, July 18, 1895

THE religious papers are now publishing with warm approval a letter from the late Professor Dana the eminent geologist, concerning the relation of evolution to Christianity. Following is a portion of the letter:

While admitting the derivation of man from an inferior species, I believe that there is a divine creative act at the origin of man; that the event was as truly a creation as if it had been from the earth or inorganic matter to man. I find nothing in the belief to impair or disturb my religious faith—that is, my faith in Christ as the source of all hope for time and for eternity.

But the Bible says that...

Genesis 2

⁷ God formed man of the dust of the ground.

This was written by Moses, of whom Christ said,

John 5

⁴⁷ If you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

Since the theory of evolution directly contradicts the Scriptures, and Christ identifies himself with the Scriptures, it is evident that a belief in evolution is utterly incompatible with perfect faith in Christ. He who ignores one plain statement of the Bible, thereby denies the authority of the entire Bible. Evolution and Christianity are as much opposed to each other as darkness and light.

21. Eating and Living

Present Truth, August 1, 1895

SOME professors of religion excuse their lack of daily Scripture reading by saying they have “scarcely time to eat.” But it is just as impossible for one to be a Christian without feeding upon the Word, as it is for one to live physically without eating.



22. Hearing the Word

Present Truth, August 1, 1895

Original title: Increase of Faith. But reprinted in *Signs of the Times*, October 3, 1895 under the title, Hearing the Word.

Luke 17:5

WHEN the Lord spoke of the necessity of forgiveness, the apostles said to Him,

Luke 17

⁵ Increase our faith.

Many people today make the same prayer, and make it in vain because they do not recognize the Lord's answer.

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

If a person desires more faith, he has but to listen more attentively to the Word of God. There is no other place from which faith can come, and so we must go there for it.

But let it be remembered that it is the Word of God, and not that of men, that is to be heard. If men are really sent from God, and preach only the Word, then it is all right; but let it never be forgotten that faith cannot come from hearing the word of men. It is evident, therefore, that when men speak we must be able to discern whether or not they are speaking the Word of God. That means that we must know the Word of God for ourselves. We must study it for ourselves, recognizing God's voice in it, to know exactly what it says. If this is done there will be no difficulty in the matter of faith. That man who gives himself patiently to the study of the Word of God, will have faith just as surely as he will have strength if he eats good food and breathes pure air.

23. Shutting the Eyes

Present Truth, August 1, 1895

THE ostrich, when in danger, it is said, sometimes hides its head in the sand so that it cannot see its foes, and imagines itself secure. This is thought to be very stupid; but it is no more so than the course of people who shut their eyes to the truth and think to pass on in security. We can no more escape truth by shutting our eyes to it than we can delay time by turning back the hands of a clock.

Many persons pursue this course with reference to the truths of God's Word. They find some of those truths very unpleasant; or it may be they are afraid they will find unpleasant truths if they investigate; so they shut their eyes, refusing to look at what God's Word presents, thinking that somehow it will come out all right in the end. But the Lord has never sanctioned willful ignorance.

What they should do is to open their eyes wider instead of shutting them, and investigate fully the truths which come to them out of God's Word, and then they would see that those are not unpleasant truths, as they had thought, but are really

Luke 2

¹⁰ ...good tidings of great joy.

They are each a part of the Gospel, which is the "good news"¹⁵⁸ sent from God to man, the news that He has undertaken to redeem fallen man, restore to him his innocence and purity, and his home in paradise. All the truths of God's Word which relate to man's duty here are pleasant truths to the one who will believe them.

Doubtless there were some people in Noah's day who shut their eyes to the truth of a coming flood, after the conviction had come to them that Noah was preaching the truth. But while they thus

¹⁵⁸ *Proverbs 25:25.*

“knew not,”¹⁵⁹ the flood came, and they miserably perished. Their example is surely not one to be imitated. It is in love and mercy that God shows us truth, whatever truth it may be. It is only a token that He is going forward in His plan of saving us, and we should receive it as such, and gladly go forward with Him.



¹⁵⁹ *Matthew 24:39.*

24. Tradition and the Monuments

Present Truth, August 22, 1895

HOW easily the knowledge of the events of creation and the fall could be passed by word of mouth from earliest time to the days following the deluge, can be seen at once when it is remembered that Noah lived hundreds of years with Methuselah, who was contemporary with Adam. And the children of Noah must have imparted to their children whatever knowledge they possessed, and they themselves lived in the days of the oldest of the patriarchs, who had lived in the days of Adam. And besides all this, and more than all, God spoke to men by prophet and teacher, the witness of Enoch, “the seventh from Adam,”¹⁶⁰ and of Noah, the “preacher of righteousness,”¹⁶¹ being mentioned in Scripture.

As this knowledge was handed down from generation to generation it would of course become perverted as the world lapsed into idolatry, refusing to retain God in their knowledge. The ancient tablets which are being dug from the sands of Assyria and Babylonia show that this was exactly what occurred.

Thus there are tablets giving accounts of the creation, the institution of the Sabbath, the fall, the deluge, and the dispersion of the descendants of Noah, showing in a striking manner that the most ancient heathen world possessed traditions—twisted and corrupted to meet the pagan polytheism, it is true, but nevertheless traditions which have started with a gradual perversion of the truthful story of the events, as narrated in Scripture.

To the believer the Scripture needs no confirmation, and these records are interesting merely as evidence of the extent to which the nations had departed from the knowledge of God which they once possessed as the apostle shows in the 1st chapter of *Romans*. But unbelief—always unreasonable and capable of the strangest freaks—reverses the true and natural course of tradition, and

¹⁶⁰ *Jude* 1:14.

¹⁶¹ *2 Peter* 2:5.

learned Assyriologists gravely say that the plain statements of Scripture, which we know are the words of the Holy Spirit, are derived from the mystical traditions of these tablets of primitive times. Could anything illustrate more completely the disposition of the times to explain away the Word of God?

25. Bible Study

Present Truth, August 29, 1895

IN *Deuteronomy* 6:5-9 we have directions as to our duty in regard to the Bible. We will quote it in full:

Deuteronomy 6

⁵ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

⁶ And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart;

⁷ And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

⁸ And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

⁹ And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.

This is a complete model for Bible study. It was not intended to be local, for the Jews merely, but is for all persons, in all time. Not that we are to wear phylacteries as the Jews did; this passage does not command that.

The first part explains the last. The Word of God is to be studied and meditated upon so much that it will have a controlling influence over every act that our hands perform. We should work so that all that we do will bear the impress of the Word. Thus it will be for a sign upon our hands. In like manner the forehead stands

for the mind, which is to be stored with the truths of God's Word. They are ever to be before our eyes.

But notice especially the command to talk of the Word when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise up. How can this be done? Must we carry a Bible with us continually? That would be very inconvenient, and almost impossible. We could not use it while we were at work, nor in the night. The previous expression explains the whole thing:

Deuteronomy 6

⁶ And these words, which I command you this day, shall be *in your heart*.

That is the secret of Bible knowledge. The Bible must be studied so carefully that the words will be indelibly fixed in our mind and heart. Then we can meditate upon them wherever we are, or whatever we are doing.

26. A Patronizing Critic

Present Truth, August 29, 1895

WHEN Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He met every attack by the living Word, quoting each time from *Deuteronomy*. The modern critic, wiser in his own conceit than the Lord, would scarcely think of using *Deuteronomy* as authority. However, the last critic is very patronizing. Professor Driver has just brought out a commentary on the book in which he says that the author of this portion of Scripture...

...cannot be held guilty of dishonesty or literary fraud,

—and,

There is nothing in *Deuteronomy* implying an interested or dishonest motive on the part of the (post-Mosaic) author.

27. Deluge Tablets

Present Truth, September 12, 1895

IT WAS of course impossible that tradition should fail to preserve for many generations some memory of the flood; and, as within a few years of this deluge the whole world lapsed into idolatry, these traditions would necessarily be interwoven with the religious notions of the times. In the Chaldean deluge tablets, dating perhaps from the days of Abraham, are many passages which are interesting as showing how many details were more or less accurately preserved to memory, although the moral lesson of the flood and Noah's life of righteousness was lost sight of.

The tablets represent the gods as having decided to destroy the earth, and the man who survived tells the story. The making of the ark:

And on the ground I make the ship which you command.
On the fifth day two sides were raised
In its enclosure (hull) fourteen ribs
Also fourteen they numbered above
I placed its roof and enclosed it
Sixthly I made it firmly, seventhly I divided its passages
Eighthly its interior I examined
Openings to the water I stopped
I searched for cracks and the wanting parts I fixed
Three sari of bitumen I poured over the interior.

The record in *Genesis* gives the Lord's command to "pitch it within and without with pitch." The tablets tell of the preservation of animals and the storing of the ark with food for all. The memory of those who scoffed at Noah was preserved in the lines:

The building of this ship which you command
If it be made by me
Then will laugh at me the children of the people and the old
men
Each opened his mouth and spoke to me, his servant
If they laugh at you, you shall say to them

Every one who has turned from me
Shall be punished for the protection of the gods is over me.

So it goes on, describing the coming of the rain at the appointed time, the cessation of rain, the floating corpses, the sending out of the dove and raven, the setting of the rainbow, and the promise that there would not be another flood.

The fact that the generations of the sons of Noah were able to preserve such records of the great judgment against sin shows how great was their guilt in refusing to keep God in their knowledge and to learn the lesson which the flood was designed to teach. But out from amid a people who were thus turning the truth of God into a lie came Abraham, the Father of the Faithful. All knew enough to turn from their wicked ways, but he alone was willing to be counted as a friend of God.

28. Inconceivable

Present Truth, September 12, 1895

SOMETIMES we hear men speak of certain things contained in the Bible as inconceivable. Again, we hear those who are combating certain forms of error in regard to the work of God, say that such things are inconceivable.

“We cannot conceive of God’s doing such things,” they say.

All this may be so, and yet it does not affect the case in the least, one way or the other. The works and ways of God are not to be measured by man’s finite conception. Let us beware of putting our ignorance as a substitute for the knowledge of God.

29. Interpretation

Present Truth, September 19, 1895

TO INTERPRET means to explain what is unintelligible,—to put that which is vague and mysterious into plain language.

The Bible Is Plain

But the Bible does not stand in need of this. It is simple and plain to those who are simple enough to believe just what it says, without trying to make it fit their ideas.

Light

David said,

Psalm 119

¹⁰⁵ Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

A light is for the purpose of making other things clear; but a light which could not be seen without the aid of another light, would not be much of a light.

All Light

Even the most difficult portions of the Bible are for the purpose of giving light.

2 Peter 1

¹⁹ We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

Matthew 11

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes.

The Difficulty

How is it, then, that people find such difficulty in understanding the Bible? It is because there is a settled conviction in the minds of most people that the Bible does not mean what it says. Accord-

ingly people will go everywhere except to the Bible, to find out the meaning of the Bible. They get from some source or other an idea of what the Bible means, and then try to fit the language of the Bible to that idea. This makes necessary a “system of interpretation;” and as different classes of people have different ideas, so there are different systems of interpretation, and all tend to obscure the light.

Teachers

Is there, then, no need of teachers? Indeed there is. The gift of teaching is third in order of the gifts of Christ, and is above the gift of working miracles.

1 Corinthians 12

²⁸ And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

But remember that it is a gift of the Spirit. Teaching the Bible properly does not consist in “interpreting” it by human wisdom, but in...

1 Corinthians 2

¹³ ...comparing spiritual things with spiritual,

—by the aid of the Spirit, whose office it is to guide into all truth.

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

The Example of Christ

Jesus, the great Teacher, who was anointed with the Holy Spirit for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the poor, occupied His time in directing the minds of the people to the Word. They could not understand it because they had glossed over so much with human speculation and tradition.

Matthew 15

³ But He answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

⁶ Thus have you made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

⁷ You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

⁸ This people draws near unto me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

⁹ But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

John 5

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

The Walk to Emmaus

When He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus,

Luke 24

²⁷ He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

That is, as they had been slow of heart to believe, He set the Scriptures so plainly before them that they could not help seeing them as they were, and, referring to the matter, they said,

³² Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He *opened to us* the Scriptures?

The Opened Word

That is what is wanted. Let the Scriptures be *opened*.

Psalms 119

¹³⁰ The opening of your words gives light...

—for they themselves are light;

¹³⁰ ...it gives understanding to the simple.

What is necessary is that we should consider what the Lord says, and He will give us...

2 Timothy 2

⁷ ...understanding in all things.

Rest on the Word

Before the crucifixion Jesus had told the disciples these things. He had spoken plainly of His coming decease. But the difficulty was that they did not listen to what He *said*. Their thoughts were on their own plans, their own ideas as to how it ought to be, and notwithstanding the plainest statements, they did not hear what He told them. Now, when the Lord had been removed from their sight, and they failed to recognize Him on the walk to Emmaus, He directed their minds to the Word, and they saw what they could not see before because they listened to it without preconceived opinions and plans of their own. It is evident that...

Luke 24

¹⁶ ...their eyes were held that they should not know Him,

—in order that their faith might rest on the Scriptures alone, and that having found Christ and His life in the Word, their faith might stand when His visible presence was removed from them.

30. The Growth of Faith

Present Truth, October 17, 1895

THE Apostle Paul wrote thus to the church of the Thessalonians:

2 Thessalonians 1

³ We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly.

How many there are who are longing for a like experience, and are praying, "Increase our faith," without realizing that the answer to their prayer rests with themselves. Let such read the following bit of experience, and profit by it.

Mr. Moody says that when he was president of the *Young Men's Christian Association* in Chicago, he used to say:

What we want is faith; if we only have faith, we can turn Chicago upside down. I thought that some day faith was going to come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of *Romans*: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since.

To expect to grow in grace without Bible study is as idle as to expect to increase in physical strength without eating.

31. Thinking Upon the Bible

Present Truth, October 17, 1895

Thinking Upon the Bible

THE thoughts of any man *upon* the Scriptures are worth just as much as the man himself, and no more; but no matter how pious or learned the man may be, the thoughts are at the best only the thoughts of a man. They are not God's thoughts; and as it is impossible for anything to add to the brilliancy of the sun, so the thoughts of men *upon* the Bible cannot make it more clear. If they do not obscure it, they do the most that can be expected of them.

Thinking from the Bible

But when we have thoughts *from* the Bible, we have God's own thoughts, no matter how insignificant the man who presents them to us. We are not to put our thoughts upon the Bible, but to let the Bible put its thoughts upon us. What a man thinks about God is of much less importance than what God thinks about him.

Listen to the Lord

When we meet a master in any branch of learning, we are not continually intruding our opinions upon him, but are glad to be quiet, that we may have our little minds enriched from his superior stores. Surely it is not fitting that we should be more presumptuous in the presence of God than in the presence of man.

Psalm 46

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God.

When God speaks, man ought to be content to lay his hand upon his mouth, and listen in silence.

32. Why Some Hate the Word

Present Truth, November 7, 1895

THE world is constantly hearing of criticisms of the Bible from theological professors in Germany. Those who do not know what is required in a teacher of theology in German State institutions may sometimes wonder how it comes that those supposed to teach the Bible spend their time in criticizing it. It must be remembered that the State religion in Germany is a branch of politics, and men are appointed to chairs of theology as to any other office under the State.

In the *Homiletic Review*, Dr. D. S. Gregory, who evidently knows of what he speaks, declares that often the professor hates the Bible and earnest Christians because they are a perpetual rebuke to the corrupt and beastly life he leads. If he fills a professor's chair in such a theological institution, where drunken brawls are not unknown, and where licentiousness is rife and often open, to attract attention, he must have something striking to present in his teaching. Hence the theological vagaries, etc.

33. Dedication

Present Truth, November 7, 1895

IN A sermon preached at the dedication of a new church, called the “Church of Our Holy Redeemer,” Cardinal Vaughan said:

The Book of the Gospels is not a closed book, it is not confined to foreign tongues, and not given only to the clergy; it is written in our own language, it is published in the cheapest form, and all are invited, nay, pressed, to read and study it. The Gospels are the great source from which to learn, and there is no devotion in the Church of any kind that is higher, better, or even to be compared with devotion to the Most Holy Redeemer. Nay, more; if any devotion could draw away hearts from our Saviour it thereby stands self-condemned.

We have no right to suppose that the Cardinal was not sincere in his statement, and we are glad to record it. His eulogy of devotion to the Most Holy Redeemer would have been more pointed, however, if the building which he was dedicating had not contained altars to “the Sacred Heart,” “Our Lady,” “St. Joseph,” and “St. Francis.”

34. Results of Finding a Bible

Present Truth, November 21, 1895

WHEN Josiah came to the throne of Judah the people were so corrupted by heathenism that they had actually lost sight of the Scriptures. While repairing the temple, however, a copy of the “book of the law” was brought out from some corner where it had lain neglected.¹⁶²

When this was read the king and the elders saw how far they had departed from the truth, and they began to put down the idolatrous worship; the chariots of the sun and the altars dedicated to sun-worship were destroyed, together with the emblems of deities associated with the central sun-worship.

This is what the finding of the Scriptures led to in Josiah’s day. Now the Scriptures are plentiful in our land, but far too many are covered with dust, and are laid aside forgotten. And then again when they are read the dust of tradition and custom is allowed to obscure them.

People now need to find the lost Bible. It is God’s voice to us now; and it warns just as of old against the corruptions of heathenism which have stolen into the Church. Let the Word be truly found, and it will be seen that there is necessity now to destroy the symbolism of the ancient sun-worship, and turn from practices which are of heathen origin, and whose influence is the same as in all past time.

¹⁶² 2 Kings 22.

1896



1. The Spirit as Witness and Guide

Present Truth, January 23, 1896

ON ALL sides the Bible is being discredited. Of the attacks of professed infidels, and of the so-called Higher Critics, we need not speak, because they are so open and undisguised that people may be on their guard. But the most dangerous assault upon the Bible is that which makes it secondary to Christ or the Holy Spirit, so that people unconsciously set the Word of God aside while imagining that they are doing superior homage to Him who gave the Word.

An instance of this, which is becoming deplorably common among Christian people, is found in the reply of the New York *Independent* to the taunt of a Catholic paper in regard to its acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith. It said:

When did the *Independent* ever say that the Bible is the sole and only rule of faith? We believe that our Lord said, that He would give His Spirit "which shall lead you into all truth." We regard the teaching of the Holy Spirit as a rule of faith.

Such is the looseness with which the Bible is now held, that most people would doubtless see in this only a tribute to the Holy Spirit instead of the disparagement of the Word of God. Let us see what the Bible says about the matter.

In the first place, it is positively stated that the Bible came only by the Spirit.

2 Peter 1

²¹ The 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.

Not only so, but the Holy Spirit was in all cases the speaker, so that the Bible is the language of the Holy Spirit, and of none other. Thus the sweet Psalmist of Israel said,

2 Samuel 23

² The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.

With this agrees the words of the Apostle Peter, when he spoke of the Scripture...

Acts 1

¹⁶ ...which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas.

Also the words of:

1 Timothy 4

¹ Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.

When Christ promised the disciples the Spirit in His absence, He said:

John 16 [RV]

⁸ When He is come He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

The first work of the Spirit is to convict of sin. But by what means? By...

Ephesians 6

¹⁷ ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;

Hebrews 4

¹² For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Romans 3

²⁰ By the law is the knowledge of sin,

Romans 7

¹⁴ ...[because] the law is spiritual.

Again, the promise of Christ is,

John 16

¹³ When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.



But the Saviour also said in praying to the Father for His disciples:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth; your Word is truth.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies because the Spirit uses the word of truth. So we read that...

2 Thessalonians 2

¹³ God has from the beginning chosen us unto salvation: through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Read onward in the Saviour's promise that the Spirit shall guide us into all truth:

John 16

¹³ For He shall not speak from himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine and shall declare it unto you.

¹⁵ All things whatsoever the Father has are mine; therefore said I, that He takes of mine and shall declare it unto you.

The Spirit is sent to us by the Father, even as Christ was sent by the Father; so just as Christ spoke not His own words, but those which the Father gave Him, the Spirit does likewise. Here we have evidence not simply that the Word of God is the witness of the Spirit, but that the Spirit does not speak anything but what we find in the Word of God—the Bible. He is not independent of the Father, but speaks only the word of the Father.

We read, in harmony with Christ's promise, that the Spirit makes us know...

1 Corinthians 2

¹² ...the things that are freely given to us of God,

—and this is because...

¹⁰ ...the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The “deep things of God,” which the Spirit shows us, are the great things of God's law;¹⁶³ and so we are taught to pray,

Psalms 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

This opening of the eyes is the work of the Spirit:

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

“Well,” someone may say, “I believe in the direct witness of the Spirit; I know that the Spirit witnesses to me that I am a child of God.”

¹⁶³ *Hosea 8:12.*

The Holy Spirit does certainly witness with the spirits of some men, but not all. With whom does He witness? With those who believe; for none others are of God, and so none others can possibly have the witness. This witness is direct too; but how is it? A witness testifies, and must testify in words. Now in what words does the Spirit testify? Why, manifestly in the words which are given Him to speak,—even the words of God. So we read:

1 John 5

¹⁰ He that believes on the Son has the witness in himself; he that believes not God, has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.

Acts 10

⁴³ To Him give all the prophets witness.

But we have already read that the prophets spoke only as the Spirit spoke through them. So we read in *Hebrews* of the offering of Christ,

Hebrews 10

¹⁵ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness unto us,

—and then follow the words which He testified.

It is evident, therefore, that any disparagement of the Bible, even to the slightest degree, is a disparagement of the Holy Spirit. To ignore the Bible as a guide, and at the same time to profess to honor the Holy Spirit, is the same as professed great respect for a man, and at the same time to ignore or deny what he says.

It may be said that the Bible is not ignored, but that the Spirit is taken as an additional guide. But what then is the use of the Bible? If the Spirit testifies part of the time aside from the Bible, why not all the time? That this is an actual ignoring of the Bible, is proved by the results; for those who profess to believe that the Holy Spirit leads apart from the Word of God, inevitably come to trust wholly in that supposed guidance, even though it is contrary to the Word.

If it were true that the Spirit did testify to us, apart from the Bible, then we should have nothing but our own minds by which to determine whether or not any impression is really from the Spirit. And so it is, that they who think that the Spirit leads them, independently of God's Word, are simply following their own desires and imaginations. A complete demonstration of this is seen in the fact that those who follow such supposedly independent leading of the Spirit, invariably run into a direct violation of God's law.

Let no one think that he can exalt the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit at the expense of the Bible. Just as the Bible is honored, will they be honored. The Spirit of God is sufficient to guide us into all truth, and to make us perfect in it, because He guides humble, trusting ones into the full understanding of the Scripture, which is able to make a man...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2. Palestine 3,500 Years Ago

Present Truth, February 6, 1896

THE following from the *Edinburgh Review* give some instructive facts gleaned from recent discoveries in the East, showing the literary life of the days of Moses and before. Incidentally the writer rebukes the Higher Critics, who, years ago, before these bricks and tablets were dug up, refused to believe that Moses could have written anything in his uncivilized day. The rebuke is useless. The critics believe the tablets, of course, but now the theory is that the Scripture record of the creation and later history is from the tablets. Well, Christians can only preach the Word, knowing that it convicts the sinner, and that sinful departure from God is the source of infidelity. Here are the paragraphs referred to:

We have become possessed of certain very important indications as to the early civilization of Palestine by means of clay tablets. Not that the knowledge so attained is altogether new, or that it conflicts with that which has been deduced from yet earlier Egyptian records.

It is well known to scholars that Thothmes III, when he defeated the league of Hittites of Phoenicians at Megiddo, in 1600 BC (a century before Amenophis III acceded), reaped a spoil which indicates the advanced civilization of Syria, including not only the precious metals and chariots painted and plated, but also objects of art having a high aesthetic value, and that he found corn, wine, and oil abundant in the country, and many hundreds of walled towns, in which there were already temples of the gods.

Such evidence has, however, been slighted by those who regard the early Hebrews as savages, and who think that, though placed in the very center of the ancient civilized world between the Egyptians and the Assyrians, they were, nevertheless, unacquainted with any arts and uninfluenced by surrounding culture.

The new discoveries insist on quite another understanding of their ancient history. It is surely a lesson of humility that the modern student should learn from such discoveries. Voltaire was

no doubt a writer of great originality and acumen, though, from our present standpoint, wonderfully ignorant of antiquity. He finds it hard to believe that Homer's poems could have been written down before 500 BC, and asserts that papyrus had not been invented in Egypt in the time of Moses, though we now possess in the maxims of Ptah-hotep a manuscript as old as the pyramids.

We find, on the contrary, that not only in Egypt or in Mesopotamia was the art of writing known in the time of Moses, but that the inhabitants of Palestine also could pen a brick epistle, which in the space of a few inches contained as much information as can now be condensed into a sheet of notepaper. Such letters were neither heavy nor bulky, and could be carried in the turban or in the folds of the shirt-bosom just as easily as paper letters are now carried, with the additional advantage that they were imperishable, as is witnessed by the fact that they are now being read three thousand five hundred years after they were written.

3. The New Light

Present Truth, February 20, 1896

ALL over the civilized world people are now discussing a new discovery and photography, a specimen of which we present on this page. A few words may suffice to give the reader some idea of what the discovery is.

It is well known that ordinary light consists of different rays, which may be separated by the spectrum. The rainbow is proof that there are different colors in sunlight. Some of the rays of light may be seen, and others are invisible to the eye.

The rays of light with which we are familiar will pass through a glass, but not through wood, paper, etc. Consequently we see through a glass, but not through wood. The new ray which has been discovered in the course of electrical experiments, will not pass through a glass, but will pass through wood, paper, and sheets of aluminum. So although the human eye cannot see through those substances, since it cannot perceive the light that penetrates them, a sensitive plate upon which those peculiar rays of light are gathered up, reveals the fact that those substances which we have named are not really opaque after all. Coins and metals have been photographed through wood, so that in the photograph you can, as it were, see through the box that encloses them.

This is very wonderful, but something more wonderful still, and which promises to be very practical, is that the newly-discovered light will pass through flesh, but not bone. Consequently the skeleton of a living man may be photographed. In the photograph of a man's hand, shown in the cut [next page], we see all the bones distinctly through the flesh, which appears only in outline as a shadow.

This discovery promises to be, and has already proved, of practical benefit in surgery, enabling the surgeon to locate a bullet or piece of steel in the body, or to detect the exact nature of any dis-

ease or malformation of bone. The exact nature of a fracture, or the progress of repair of bone, may be clearly seen by the aid of the new light.

But it is to the Christian Bible student that this discovery is the most interesting, since it is full of suggestion and illustration of spiritual truths. Remember that this so-called “new light” is not new at all, but has only newly come to the knowledge of man. It has been from the beginning. Remember also that God...

1 John 1

⁷ ...is in the light,

—and that...

⁵ [He] is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

These rays, as others of which we know nothing, and which doubtless have still greater power of penetration, have always been visible to His all-seeing eye. And, lastly, remember that His Word produces light; because His Word is light. With all this in mind, and this picture before us, with what new force and reality the scripture comes to us:

Hebrews 4

¹² 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.



X-ray Photograph of Hand

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

How much more real the truth is that He can see through every substance. The Psalmist prayed,

Psalm 139

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts:

²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me.

This prayer was inspired by the Spirit of God, and therefore shows what God really does. So in the same psalm we read,

¹ O Lord, You have searched me, and known me...

² You understand my thought afar off.

Again we are told,

Ephesians 5

¹³ All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for that which does make manifest is light.

God holds us up to the pure light of His Word, which penetrates not only flesh and bone, but soul and spirit. Sin only is dark and opaque. That light will reveal the cherished sin, just as this new light will reveal the leaden bullet embedded in the flesh. If the soul loves the light, he becomes...

⁸ ...light in the Lord,

—and so...

John 3

²¹ [He] comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The light shines through him, and reveals no foreign substance. He is then...

Philippians 1

¹⁰ ...sincere, and without offense.

Jesus has said that...

Matthew 10

²⁶ There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed: and hid, that shall not be known.

The day of the Lord will declare it. When He comes, His glory shall fill the earth, and...

1 Corinthians 4

⁵ [He] will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.

When a man first sees his own sinful condition, he imagines that God is as much surprised at the discovery as he is, and that God must abhor him as much as he does himself. He forgets that what is newly revealed to him was perfectly plain to God from the beginning, and that it was only the hitherto-undiscovered rays of the light of God's Word that enabled him to see it. But the same light that reveals the sin will remove it if we acknowledge it. If not, in the last day when every hidden sin will stand revealed as clearly to every eye as are the bones in the photograph, by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, the light will remove the sinner with his sin,

Hebrews 12

²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.

God gives evidence, not explanation. He lets us know facts, but does not attempt to make our finite minds comprehend how they are accomplished. But He illustrates. We now know the fact that light will penetrate substances hitherto considered impervious to its rays. We cannot tell how it is; and a few weeks ago if anybody had said that it is possible to see through a board, and through human flesh, everybody would have said,

"It is impossible; I don't believe it."

Yet now we know it to be a fact. Is not this discovery granted for the purpose of confounding those who say that they do not

believe that Christ can dwell in the heart, because they do not see how it can be done? He is the Light of the world, and His representative is the Spirit of light. What matters it that we do not know how it can be? His Word assures us that it is even so; and if we will but believe it we shall know the truth of it,

1 John 2

⁸ ...because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.



4. What to Answer

Present Truth, March 26, 1896

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

THIS text is often misunderstood, simply because it is not carefully read. Many take it as though it said,

“Be ready to argue and dispute with every man you meet, whether he asks you any question or not.”

Others do not pervert it quite so much, but take it for granted that it means to be ready to try to convince a man by argument, and by the presentation of Scripture texts.

But what we are told to do is to be ready to give a *reason of the hope that is in us*, that is, to tell why we have a hope. In other words it is to give our personal experience in the things of God.

This means, of course, that one should have a clear and living hope. It must be *in us* and not merely in the Bible. Many a man can present a clear and logical scriptural argument concerning the Gospel, who knows nothing of it by personal experience. It is said that in some of the schools held by missionaries in India, the Hindu students, who have no faith in Christ or His Word, will often present better theses on the evidences of Christianity, than the Christian students do. Such ones tell what they have heard, and not what they know.

The word that is in the Bible alone will do no one any good. Anyone can see that if the Bible were never opened and read, no one would ever be benefited by it. Even so, though it be read, yet if its words do not come into the heart and life, there is no profit.

Now it is given to Christians to open and present this Word to the world. The men of the world will not do it for themselves. But it must be the living Word that we give them. It is *the Word made*

flesh that saves men. The only argument that the world cannot gainsay or resist, is the argument of living Christianity. The Gospel of Christ is not a theory or a creed, but a life, even the life of Christ himself.

The Word, just as it stands in the Bible, is to be presented to the world, but it must come as the living Word, through a living channel.

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ Sanctify the Lord in your hearts.

Let the Word become flesh in you, and then the words of Scripture will come, not as if quoted from a book, but with authority, as from the mouth of the Lord himself. The only real hope that a man can have, is...

Colossians 1

²⁷ ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Therefore to give the reason for the hope in us, is simply to give the grounds of our personal acquaintance with Christ. When we have that acquaintance, the answer will be with meekness and fear, because those who learn of Him learn meekness and lowliness, for He is...

Matthew 11

²⁹ ...meek and lowly in heart.

5. The True Reformation Spirit

Present Truth, April 9, 1896

WRITING of Martin Luther, and the mighty reformation of which he was the instrument through his preaching of the truth that “the just shall live by faith,”¹⁶⁴ Prof. Adolph Harnack, of Berlin, says:

But we must not forget that it was four hundred years ago when Luther taught. The convenient belief that he thought out everything for us, and that we can rest on his teaching, is a foolish one. The greatest hero is always only a *finisher* for the past; as regards the future he is but a *beginner*. He who does not understand Luther so that he learns from him the spirit with which to solve the problems and lessons, and so that he endeavors to continue the Reformer’s work, understands him falsely. The prophets have given to us, not that we should build their graves, but that we should inflame our hearts through their faith and their courage.

And the same is true of every reformer. The best of men are fallible; therefore he who copies any man, is sure to fall into error. Luther was a reformer only as he preached the Word. The true followers of the reformers are those who are loyal to that Word, even though it leads them as far in advance of the reformers as the reformers were in advance of the mass of men in their day.

¹⁶⁴ *Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.*

6. The Unreasonable Man

Present Truth, April 16, 1896

Original title: Front Page

2 Thessalonians 3

¹ Finally, brethren, pray for us,...

² That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.

FROM this we learn that the unreasonable man is the man who has not faith. He is both unreasonable and wicked;

Romans 14

²³ ...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Sin is unreasonable. In the Bible sinners are characterized as foolish persons.

Job 28

²⁸ The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Romans 10

¹⁰ With the heart man believes unto righteousness.

The heart, therefore, and not the head merely, determines whether one is or is not reasonable. Foolishness is more a matter of the heart than of the head. Some of the most foolish people have very good intellectual faculties, but a depraved heart deceives them.

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The connection between faith and the Word is shown in the text first quoted.

2 Thessalonians 3

¹ Pray for us, that the Word of God may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

² And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.

The unreasonable and wicked man is the man who has not faith; and the man who has not faith is the man who does not accept God's Word without question. The really reasonable man is not the one who can argue every point, and can answer every question out of his own head, but the man who believes God. An unlettered plough-boy may thus have more right reason than a cultured philosopher.

Isaiah 1

¹⁸ Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.

How often that text is used to justify strife and debate and quibbling over the Word of God. Many people take it as though it read,

“Come now, and let us argue together, says the Lord.”

No; it says, “Let us reason together;” and when the Lord begins to talk, the most reasonable thing for men to do is to keep still, except as he responds, “Amen.”

The remaining portion of the text shows that this is all that is expected of man in reasoning with the Lord. He continues,

¹⁸ ...Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

¹⁹ If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land:

²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Now what can anybody say to that? Only that he believes and accepts it, or that he does not. To say the latter is to say that God is a liar, and that is the height of folly. Manifestly, therefore, when the Lord calls us to come and reason together with Him, He means us to listen with reverent humility, and to except what He says without any gainsaying.

Mind that it is not *our conception* of what God means, that we are to accept. That would be simply to set up our wisdom in op-

position to God's, which is the height of presumptuous folly. It is to say that we cannot venture to accept anything from the Lord without first submitting it to the test of our superior judgment. But God's mind is not to be measured by man's. He is...

Ephesians 3

²⁰ ...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

What God is able to do, that He does. He is infinite, and there is not a word or an act of God that does not contain more than the mind of the wisest man can fathom. What impudent folly, then, to presume to pass God's word through the sieve of our feeble intellect before accepting it!

Nicodemus started in on that line with the Lord. When Jesus spoke about the new birth, he asked,

John 3

⁹ How can these things be?

—and endeavoured to show that the thing was impossible. He afterwards, however, learned wisdom by attending to the Word. When Jesus spoke about the necessity of eating His flesh, the Jews asked,

John 6

⁵² How can this man give us His flesh to eat?

They thought that this question settled the matter.

Notice that pure human reasoning, as expressed in the preceding questions, is doubt. It is negative. It does not build up anything, but only endeavors to tear down and obstruct. It tends to make more narrow the field of vision that one already has. But God's thoughts are infinite, and when they are received in simple faith, without any attempt to dissect and analyze them, they expand the mind. There is no limit to the development of the mind that reasons according to the Lord's plan.

The Word is given to all; it carries its own credentials, so that faith comes by it; therefore faith is given to all. The only reason why any men have not faith is that they have not kept it. It is both sword and shield—a mighty weapon.

2 Corinthians 10

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

⁵ Casting down imaginations [margin: “reasonings”], and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.



7. Essaying the Impossible

Present Truth, April 30, 1896

THE Scripture says:

Hebrews 7

⁷ Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

That is the reason why the greatest human intellect is misdirected when it essays to defend or vindicate the Bible. The Word of God requires no vindication. No great man can do anything for the Word, save to speak it, and to believe it.

The other day a newspaper described an introduction which Mr. Gladstone has written for a new Bible History, as “a masterpiece of vindication.” The notion that the Bible is a book which a great man and a scholar can vindicate springs from the impression that it is more or less a product of human thought, capable of being strengthened by superior human intellect. Hence it is not surprising that the reviewer quotes, as worthy “to be written up in letters of gold”:

It is not the Bible that produced religion and morals, but religion and morals that produce the Bible.

Everyone knows that Mr. Gladstone thinks to commend the Bible, and he says many things in a beautiful way of it, but when the finite attempts to measure the infinite and apologize for God’s own Word, the result is sure to be a pitiful failure. So subtle is the spirit of skepticism that the work of tearing down the foundations of belief goes on even in literature professing to speak for the Bible. It is because Mr. Gladstone rejects—by interpreting—the matter-of-fact statements of the creation, and is willing to submit other portions to “critical and corrective judgment” that a newspaper that is always reviewing with favor the work of the most advanced “higher critics” hails his contribution as a “masterpiece of vindication.” But...

2 Timothy 2

¹⁹ ...the foundation of God stands sure.

8. Belshazzar's Feast

Present Truth, June 18, 1896

DANIEL describes the fall of Babylon on the night of Belshazzar's impious feast, when the hand came forth and wrote the Divine judgment upon the great city. The critics long made this description one point of objection to the book of *Daniel*, as women are not usually present at Oriental feasts. After twenty-five centuries, however, a tablet was dug up, containing Cyrus' own description of his attack. As one writer says:

In it he declares that Babylon was captured "without fighting" on the fourteenth day of the month Tammuz. Now the month Tammuz was named in honor of the god Tammuz, the Babylonian Adonis, who married their Venus or Ishtar; and the fourteenth of Tammuz was a regular time to celebrate their union, with lascivious orgies. On this day of all others, the women took part in the horrible rites; and it was in this feast of kings, princes, wives, and concubines, that Babylon was taken and Belshazzar slain.

9. Spoken to You

Present Truth, July 9, 1896

THE Bible is the language of the Spirit of God spoken through men. The Spirit of God, who knows the human heart and its needs, as well as the Divine gifts, has put language into the mouths of certain men, which may be used by all. So when we read the words of David,

Psalm 103

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul,...

³ Who forgives all your iniquities,

—we are to appropriate that language as our own.

We may indeed believe that God spoke to and blessed David and Paul; but if we do not make that language and blessing our own, we do not really believe the Word, for it is addressed to us. If you wish to know if you really believe the whole Bible, you may test yourselves by this text:

Galatians 2

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

If you read this merely as Paul's experience, then you have not learned to believe the Bible. But if in reading it you can speak that word "I" as meaning yourself, and can repeat the text intelligently as the language of your own heart, as the Spirit of God meant you should, then you really believe not that verse alone, but the whole Bible, and the joy of God's salvation is yours.

10. Ever Learning, Never Knowing

Present Truth, July 23, 1896

WE READ of some who are...

2 Timothy 3

⁷ ...ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The trouble is that they do not make the truth a matter of life and heart knowledge. They merely learn theories, and are never anchored to the truth by heart knowledge of its principles. Therefore they are the prey of any plausible theory-monger that may come along, running here and there, following this and that, always learning, never knowing.

⁵ ...From such turn away.

11. Chinese Chronology

Present Truth, July 30, 1896

VERY often we meet the statement that the Bible cannot be true as the Chinese have records reaching back many thousands of years. The determined unbeliever will always swallow the tallest fable if it only runs contrary to the Bible, whose simple record he claims he cannot believe. It is like the giant who swallowed windmills but was at last choked by a pat of butter. Here is the explanation of this windmill of Chinese chronology:

Skeptics have alleged against the Bible chronology the age of the Chinese annals. At length Professor DeLacouperie has found the key to these extravagances. The Chinese themselves were unable to make sense of their oldest books, but this eminent Frenchman has deciphered them, showing that their characters are derived from the Babylonian period. In the Chinese list of mythical sovereigns, he discovers a reproduction of the first Babylonian dynasty mentioned by Berosus, and in the records which accompany it, some of the facts and legends in Babylonian history. In a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society, Professor DeLacouperie seems to set these wonderful identifications beyond doubt.

12. Getting the Preciousness

Present Truth, July 30, 1896

THE *Revised Version* brings out the thought in *1 Peter 2:7* very clearly:

1 Peter 2 [RV]

⁷ For you therefore which believe is the preciousness.

God has given exceeding great and precious promises,¹⁶⁵ but the preciousness of the gift of God is only for those who believe. The way and the service of God seems dull and barren to the unbeliever; he cannot see the joy there is in God.

Of course he cannot see what is in the promises of God, because he does not take them. He does not taste and see that the Lord is good,¹⁶⁶ but stands without, fearing to let go of the holiness of life for fear the Lord has nothing good for him. What a mistake to stand afar off and refuse to enter in, or to follow so slavishly and unbelievingly that one gets only the hardness of the way, and the crosses, without the life and power of the cross!

Unto those that believe is the preciousness. No one ever yet ventured their all upon the promises of God without finding them precious indeed,

2 Peter 1

⁴ ...exceeding great and precious.

¹⁶⁵ *2 Peter 1:4.*

¹⁶⁶ *Psalms 34:8.*

13. Understanding the Bible

Present Truth, August 13, 1896

THERE are two principal causes why people find the Bible difficult, even after they give assent to the fact that it means what it says, and think that they believe it. The first is the power of preconceived opinions. They come to the study of the Bible with certain fixed ideas, and they think that they must find those ideas in it. When they read a certain passage that conflicts in any degree with their ideas, they modify the statement to agree with their ideas. This they do unconsciously. They do not mean to put their ideas in the place of the Bible statement, but they are so firmly persuaded that their ideas are according to Scripture that they think the passage in question must be toned down a little to agree with some other text.

This suggests a principle that must be grasped and firmly adhered to before one can hope to get any real benefit from the Bible; and it this is:

The Bible means just what it says in every text.

No text can modify another, so as to make it mean less, or anything different from its plain reading. True, no one text tells all that may be said upon any subject, or else there would not be another one written on the same subject; but every text must be allowed to stand just as it is written.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

⁶ Add not unto His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

The other cause is the impatience of the reader. He cannot wait for an understanding of the text. He must know at once. So he rushes off to a commentary, or to some friend in whom he has confidence, and inquires for the meaning. Having received an an-

swer, he thinks that he knows the meaning; but he does not. Even though the exact truth be told him, he does not know it. By and by some other commentator or friend will give him another explanation of the same text, and then his doubt is greater than before. The poor man sees that learned men differ, and he wonders,

“How am I to know which is right?”

He could not know, if he were to depend on the testimony of men, for he would never know what men to depend on. But he may know for a certainty, if he will let the Lord tell him.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The knowledge of God is found in His Word, and He alone can give the understanding. We do not get light upon the Word of God, but we get light from it. *The Word itself is light*. If at the first we do not perceive the light, that is no evidence that it is not there. It will be revealed to us if we look long enough.

14. Prove All Things

Present Truth, September 3, 1896

1 Thessalonians 5

²¹ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

A VERY reasonable exhortation this, and one that should commend itself to everybody's good sense; yet few heed it, and many of those who profess to regard it misapply it.

How are we to prove all things? By what standard shall we test them? Here is where so many fail. Most people would use their own feelings and impulses as the standard. Their natural likes and dislikes determine what they shall hold fast and what they will reject. What they think to be good, they will follow; but since human judgment is naturally controlled or at least biased by inclination and desire, it is an unsafe guide.

Proverbs 16

²⁵ There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

For this reason alone, if for no other, it should be apparent to all that we are not to "prove all things" by sampling them. A thing may taste good, and yet contain a deadly poison. He who makes it his practice to eat everything he sees, in order to find out if it is good to eat, may have his probation cut short. It is far better to apply well-known tests for poisons, and then to eat only that which is proved to be good.

So in the mental and spiritual world. A man is not obliged to dabble in every theory in order to prove it. He who thinks that he must prove every form of teaching by trying its effects on himself will fare worse than the one who tries physical poisons on himself. The system cannot stand it. His nature would soon become so corrupted that he would be unable to distinguish the good, even if he got hold of it. But he would never find the good; for the forms of error are infinite, and he who sets himself to the task of

investigating all error, so as to know how to avoid it, will never finish. The only thing that he will prove will be his own folly.

Just as there are tests for physical poisons, which can be applied without subjecting ourselves to the influence of those poisons, so we have an infallible test of truth and error.

Isaiah 8

²⁰ To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

The Word of God is truth, and whatever is not in harmony with that is of course error. If we become thoroughly familiar with the Word, error will be revealed on its first approach, and we need have nothing whatever to do with it. The Word of the Lord is His voice, and all that is necessary is for us to know that; for we do not need to talk with a stranger hours or days in order to find out if the voice is that of our most intimate friend.

Least of all must it be supposed that we are to prove the Word of God itself, to see whether or not we should hold to it, or to how much we should hold fast. No; that is the standard that is already proved.

Psalms 12

⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Proverbs 30

⁵ Every word of God is pure.

The Word itself is good; hold it fast, and prove all things by it, holding only that which the Word declares to be good.

15. His Saving Knowledge

Present Truth, October 29, 1896

Hebrews 4 [RV]

¹² For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

¹³ And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

TO THE soul that does not know the Lord, this is one of the most terrible texts in the Bible. Since the day when Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden, the consciousness of guilt has ever tended to make men afraid of God. The natural inclination of the sinner is to try to hide from God; he cannot bear to have his misdeeds laid bare before the eyes of spotless purity. So the words,

¹³ ...all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do,

—and...

Psalm 139

² You understand my thought afar off,

—are words that strike terror to the heart of the ungodly. So the natural man tries to forget the fact,—tries to forget his own sins,—foolishly imagining that his ignorance, or forgetfulness, or unbelief, hides the matter from the eyes of God.

But it is impossible to hide from God, for He is everywhere, filling all space.

Psalm 139

⁷ Whither shall I go from your spirit? or whither shall I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

¹⁰ Even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

This being the case, the best thing for men to do is to face the fact, and find the comfort that there is in it, instead of following the devil's promptings, and endeavoring to hide from Him who is love,

2 Corinthians 1

³ ...the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

How is it that God knows all things? Is it by searching into the secret things, so that by study He arrives at knowledge that He did not possess before? Impossible! for that would argue imperfection on His part. We may not seek to understand God's capacities by a comparison with man.

Proverbs 15

³ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

God himself is everywhere, the direct source of all life. Wherever there is life, wherever there is a created thing to be maintained in existence, there God is, and wherever God is there is all wisdom.

Notice that the Word of God pierces the joints and marrow, and soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is a natural consequence of the fact that...

John 1

¹⁴ ...the Word was made flesh.

God in Christ has forever identified himself with humanity. When Adam stood in innocence and uprightness, it was only by the indwelling Word, upon which he wholly depended. When he forgot his dependence, and struck out for himself, and thus fell, God did not forsake him, but descended to the depths with him, that He might lift him out again. So God is...

Acts 17

²⁷ ...not far from every one of us:

²⁸ For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

When men would seek to justify themselves for not obeying the commandments of God, by professing ignorance of them, the Spirit says to them,

Romans 10

⁶ Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above);

⁷ Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead);

⁸ [For]...the Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart.

Christ, “the wisdom of God,”¹⁶⁷ knows the sins of mankind, because He “*is come* in the flesh.”¹⁶⁸ He bears the sins of the world, because the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all.¹⁶⁹ He knows them, because nothing can be done that does not touch Him; no motion can be made without the power that comes alone from the Word. This is the true “Real Presence.”

How utterly useless, then, to think of hiding our sins from the Lord! We might as well try to hide from the Lord the knowledge of His own existence. Every one of those sins is stamped upon His being. They pierce His brow, His hands, His feet, even His heart, and press upon Him so that...

Isaiah 52

¹⁴ ...His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.

He must know, for every sin touches His own life. And herein is the comfort to us in the thought of God’s knowledge of mankind.

¹⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:24.

¹⁶⁸ 1 John 4:2.

¹⁶⁹ Isaiah 53:6.

Isaiah 53

¹¹ By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.

He knows our sins, because He experiences their power, and by that knowledge He justifies many. How many? As many as believe on Him, as many as confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

Romans 10

⁹ If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Christ bears the burden of the world's guilt, and bears it easily. Our sin crushes us, and presses us down to destruction; but He swallows up death in victory.¹⁷⁰ Though sin crush out His life, yet He rises from the dead with the freshness of eternal life. Whoever knows this, and believes the truth, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, will of course let the burden fall entirely on Him who is able to bear it, and will thus be free.

So when we confess sin to God, we are not telling Him any news. We are simply agreeing with His Word. He knew it all before, but He wishes us to be confidential with Him. He is a faithful Friend, and will not betray our secrets. On the contrary, He will himself forget our misdeeds, blotting them out of existence, so that even our adversary, the devil, cannot find them, to taunt us with them. The only way to hide them from the world, is to tell them to God.

What a blessing and comfort, then, to know that God knows!

Psalms 103

¹⁴ He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

And He cares too.

¹⁷⁰ *Isaiah 25:8.*

1 Peter 5

⁷ Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.

And, what is more, He is able to carry the burden for us, and give us peace and rest.

Psalm 55

²² Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you.

Therefore unto Him that is able to keep us from falling,¹⁷¹ who is...

Ephesians 3

²⁰ ...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

—to Him who knows our sins, who pities our weakness, and who is mighty to save¹⁷² by His love and wisdom—to Him be glory and praise forever and ever.

¹⁷¹ *Jude* 1:24.

¹⁷² *Isaiah* 63:1.

16. Darwin or Moses?

Present Truth, November 12, 1896

Original title: Front Page

IN OPENING the recent Church Congress the presiding Bishop was enthusiastically applauded for expressing the opinion that the Church owed a “great debt” to Mr. Darwin for “interpreting the methods of creation.”

The leading Nonconformist journal congratulates itself on the change during the last ten ten years which makes it possible for “such a thing to be said and approved,” and many have remarked upon the evidence that the theory of evolution, for which Darwin stood, is very generally accepted in the religious world in place of the Bible account.

As it has, according to this notion, been reserved for wise scientists of modern times to get at the real truth about the methods of creation, very naturally Moses is not held in good repute. Yet the One who made the world, the Creator himself,

Psalms 103

⁷ ...made known His ways unto Moses,

—and told him what to write. But so poor an opinion do many hold of Moses that the fact that the Ten Commandments, written on tables by the finger of God, were committed to him to preserve, leads many to speak slightly of the law of God.

During his life on earth Moses was familiar enough with the ways of critics. “This Moses,” the people contemptuously called him, while he was communing with God in the mount.¹⁷³ But as he was...

Numbers 12

³ ...very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth,

—he minded none of these things. God called him...

¹⁷³ *Exodus* 32:1.

Numbers 12

⁷ My servant Moses,

—and...

Deuteronomy 33

¹ ...the man of God.

And He said He would not talk with Moses as with the ordinary prophet, but...

Numbers 12

⁸ ...mouth to mouth.

What shallow folly for vain men, whatever their powers of observation, to affect a superiority over Moses and regard him as a recorder merely of unintelligent tradition.

Moses was so eminent a Christian that he was a type of Christ himself. When God promised the Messiah, He said to Moses,

Deuteronomy 15

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth.

As Moses spoke God's words, so Jesus spoke not His own words but the words of the Father. And after Jesus had ascended, His Spirit declared that Christ was faithful even as Moses was faithful, one as a servant the other as a Son.

Hebrews 3

¹ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

² Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

Those who refused to receive Jesus Christ did so because they would not receive the testimony of Moses:

John 6

⁴⁶ Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me.

This shows what a serious thing is this modern tendency to belittle and then really reject the testimony of Moses. It is a symptom of the rejection of the Lord himself. The time has come when men are turning away from the Word and law of God unto fables, and they demand teachers who will satisfy the itching ear and the vain imagination. The Lord's exhortation for this time is...

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the Word.

As the faithful minister of Christ heeds this command he can desire no greater thing than God promised Moses when He said,

Exodus 4

¹² I will be with your mouth.

Such was Moses' Christian experience that when the redeemed stand at last upon the sea of glass on Mount Zion they can sing no higher note of triumph than that sounded in...

Revelation 15

² ...the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

His critics think of him as dead and buried, but so eminent a man of God was he that the Lord raised him from the dead by a special resurrection:

Jude

⁹ Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Matthew 17

³ And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

And now he dwells in that light which transfigured his face and shone from it when he came down from Mount Sinai.

17. Taste and See

Present Truth, November 26, 1896

ONE of my friends offers me some food which he says is very good and nourishing, and asks me to adopt it as an article of diet. But I am skeptical, and do not believe that it is good, and so I say,

“Prove to me that it is good, and I will take it.”

“That I cannot do,” he replies; “I know it is good, and can assure you of the fact; but you must prove it for yourself; taste it, and you will know it too.”

Well, that is certainly reasonable; for I can’t expect to know that a thing is good, unless I taste for myself. Even so, when my friend does not believe me when I tell him that the Lord is good, and asks me to prove it to him. I cannot; I know that He is good, for I have tried Him; I can assure others of His goodness, but I cannot prove it to them. I can only say,

Psalm 34

⁸ O taste, and see that the Lord is good.

Why will not people be as reasonable in regard to spiritual food as with the mere physical? Taste, and you have the proof.

18. Attention to Bible-reading

Present Truth, December 24, 1896

If you want to be strong Christian people, hide the Bible in your heart. You make a tremendous mistake, for your own soul's sake, if your religious reading consists in what people have said and thought about Scripture more than in the Scripture itself.

Why should you dip your cans into the reservoir, when you can take them up to where the spring comes gushing out of the hill-side, pure, and limpid, and living?¹⁷⁴

EXHORTATIONS of this kind cannot be too often repeated or too strongly emphasized. It is a deplorable fact that most people who profess an interest in the Bible, will go almost anywhere except to the Book itself, to find out what it teaches. One might as well expect to grow strong by reading treatises on the nutritive value of various foods, as to grow wise unto salvation by reading comments on the Bible. He who would grow stronger must eat the real food, and so with the Word of God which is living bread and water.

¹⁷⁴ Dr. Maclaren.

1897



1. About Marking Bibles

Present Truth, January 7, 1897

A FRIEND has asked for the best method of marking a Bible for ready reference. Quite lengthy treatises have been written on the subject, but the plan which we have followed for several years is so simple and yet so practical that we should be glad to see it universally adopted. We speak the more freely in its praise, because it is not original with us.

The plan is, in brief, this: Have your Bible near at hand, where you can pick it up at any moment. Do not let the intervals between readings be too long, nor the time devoted to each reading be too short. Select the portion of the Bible you please, and read and re-read until it is firmly impressed on your mind. Do not try to learn to repeat it parrot-like, but think upon each expression, and its relation to every other expression, until the thought is clear. Make a practice frequently to try to follow in your mind the course of the thought, turning up the passage in the Bible only when you find that you are at a loss. Do this until the text by long and frequent association, becomes very familiar, and then continue the study of it in connection with other portions of Scripture, which you treat in the same manner, and you will find that no matter how cleanly you are in your habits, the *finger marks* upon the pages of your Bible will be very noticeable and will always make it easy for you to find the desired passages. We know of no other kind of marks in a Bible that are of any value.

The practice of marking Bibles with pencil or pen and ink, sometimes in various colors, is quite common, but it is not to be compared with the one described above. Indeed, no other method is compatible with real Bible study.

“But, [says one,] I am obliged to put a mark about the text I want in order to find them.”

Yes, but you must turn to the text before you can see the mark about it, which shows that the pencil mark, is really no help at all.

But allowing that a mark does help to find a passage, it can readily be seen that a finger mark is by far the most valuable.

The finger mark indicates previous study of the text, and familiarity with it, it is the well-beaten path which shows that one often goes to this spot. On the other hand a pencil mark shows neglect of the text; for one does not need a guide-board to direct him to a place where he is daily in the habit of going. It is only in a strange place that one needs help to find a way; you will have no trouble in finding portions of Scripture that you frequently visit. When a boy is obliged to set up a stick in the onion patch, so that when he comes back he can tell where he left off weeding, the stick is evidence that he has not really been working,—it simply shows that he has been there; so the marks in a person's Bible show indeed that he has been there and read the passage, but they are conclusive evidence that he has not studied it, unless he has since learned to study, and still uses his old Bible.

It will be urged in favor of the pencil marks, that they serve to make prominent the more important texts. Well, insofar as this is necessary, the purpose is amply served by the finger marks. But which are the more important texts in the Bible? Which verse of the 23rd *Psalms*, for instance, would you select as being *the* important one? Who has not had this experience, that verses that once seemed unimportant and almost meaningless, have afterwards been seen to be overflowing with light and comfort? In any paper or book which is the product of a human mind, we may well mark the important passages, when there are any, for often all that is really valuable is in one or two paragraphs; but it is not so with the Bible. He who will disfigure the Bible with pencil marks to indicate the "valuable texts," shows that he does not appreciate the sacred Book.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture...is profitable,

—so that if one will underscore the important texts, he will simply have black marks under every line. But after having thus

marked the texts, one knows them no better than before, whereas marking after the method we have recommended insures familiarity with the text, and understanding of it. Try it, and see.



2. The Criticism of Unbelief

Present Truth, January 21, 1897

THE Word of God warns us that the thoughts of God are not the thoughts of men,¹⁷⁵ and that His ways are past finding out.¹⁷⁶ Despite this, however, and notwithstanding the Divine injunction to the contrary, men continue systematically to discount the teachings of Holy Writ. A large proportion of the most popular and influential religious teachers today believe in the Bible, and teach it, only as interpreted by human reason, not resting in faith on God's own words, and allowing them to explain themselves, or be their own interpreter, one of the other.

To allow the Bible to explain and interpret itself would be the natural method,—it would be the attitude which well-disposed critics would assume toward the work of an author in whom they had confidence.

If the reliability of a writer were doubted, then the testimony of the internal evidence would not be considered sufficient. It would be thought necessary to subject them to searching tests as to whether everything therein stated could be corroborated, and the domain of literature would be carefully searched to find whether other men had ever previously written or spoken the same things. But this active investigation, in which the statements and assertions of the writer himself should be quite disregarded, would imply a doubt of his truthfulness. It would be as much as to say that judgment upon his credibility was held in abeyance, awaiting the result of the investigation. Then it might be expected that if contradictory statements were discovered, even if unsupported, they would be held as throwing a cloud of uncertainty over the accuracy of his narrative. Then, if in the nature of things it should be impossible to prove the false to be false, or to harmonize seeming

¹⁷⁵ *Isaiah* 55:8.

¹⁷⁶ *Romans* 11:33.

contradictions, it must necessarily remain uncertain as to where the truth really was.

This is the method which is followed in popular Biblical criticism,—the method of unbelief. Then, as it is certain that the thoughts of God are not the thoughts of men, is it not just as sure that when it is attempted to corroborate the deeds of Divinity, it will be found impossible to bring forward what the human mind, from that point of view, will recognize as conclusive? Were it possible, however, the very corroboration and proof, which is sought, would be instantly destructive of the element of Divinity in the deed.

So these critics, by the course which they pursue, find unbelief a necessity, whatever their eventual conclusion. Therefore the Bible is, in their eyes, no longer an inspired Book. For them *Genesis* is no longer the story of genesis; the warning of the flood serves no purpose as a reminder of the destruction which is to come; Sinai's thunders fail to call their attention to the authority and immutability of God's law; and *Revelation* fails to reveal.

This is the result of attempting to prove the infinite by the finite, of attempting to measure the mind of God and His ways by the mind of man and human methods. It is the criticism of unbelief, and not prayerful Biblical study inspired by faith in God. He who devotes himself to the study of the Word of God by faith will never have doubts of its inspiration; God himself will open his mental vision to see the things of God.

3. Great Names

Present Truth, January 21, 1897

A LEADING religious publishing house has just brought out a book on “Higher Criticism and the Teaching of the Young,” which the *Chronicle* reviewer hails with the remark:

Nothing perhaps is more remarkable in the recent history of the religious thought than the surrender of the orthodox position with regard to the inspiration of the Bible. The defenders of this venerable theological stronghold have been compelled to capitulate to the higher critics.

Of course the book discounts inspiration, and yet it is written by men, mostly Doctors of Divinity, who bear names of great repute in the religious world. They represent, too, what is called the Evangelical side of Biblical criticism, and would feel aggrieved to be accounted enemies of Christianity. But the fact remains that they have nothing but their own authority to substitute for the authority of the Word which they consciously or unwittingly undermine. In the days of Jesus the Doctors of the Law obscured the Word and undermined its authority in the same way. But He who bore a name above...

Ephesians 1

²¹ ...every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,

—declared to the critics that...

John 10

³⁵ ...the scripture cannot be broken.

The modern critics are fond of appealing to the great names which sustain their attitude of unbelief; but the great Name is set to the seal of Holy Scripture.

4. Shutting God Away

Present Truth, January 21, 1897

IN HIS criticism of the miracles of the Old Testament, one of these writers says:

There are, we must admit, some stories in the Bible which we cannot take literally, such as that of the axe head swimming at the word of Elisha, or the three children in the fiery furnace. But a tactful teacher will know how to get over the difficulty.

The higher critic, it is to be supposed, thinks it childish to accept such stories as these; and any other critic could as readily set aside all miracles, even as some do. The thought is, that these stories bring God down to this world as directly doing something for His children who need help. This is opposed to the modern revolutionary notion of the Deity, as sitting apart in the heavens while, by the inexorable course of matter, the world swings along in its course.

Really it is not a modern notion, but only the old doctrine of Paganism, in modern dress. The pagans talked of God as enthusiastically as might be; but only in the Word and in the Word made flesh is God seen as one with His creatures, touched by their needs, and able and ready to help in the greatest distress as well as in the comparatively trivial troubles. Unbelief would shut this God away from men; but the simplest soul that knows God's power to save and to help knows more than all these learned critics ever dreamt of. Such knowledge is open to babes, but is too deep for the...

Matthew 11

²⁵ ...wise and prudent.

5. All Scripture

Present Truth, February 25, 1897

IT IS coming to be more common to find those who give away nearly all Scripture to other people or to past times, and thus shut away from their ears the living voice which speaks life. They forget that...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable,

—and that...

Romans 15

⁴ Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Most frequently this class draw the line at the Old Testament. They ignore the fact that the Scripture which the Apostles preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power as they went out to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified was at the first none other than what we call the Old Testament. Today it is the living Word of God, given by inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, and He who shuts away the voice of Jesus through “Moses and the prophets” refuses to hear the voice of Jesus who is risen from the dead. Of the practical effect of this false distinction which men draw when they judge the Word, the editor of the *Christian* recently said:

We also knew a Christian brother who had accepted the idea that much of the New Testament, as well as nearly all the Old, was Jewish. *Matthew* was essentially Jewish, the other Gospels and the *Acts* had a Judaic character. *Hebrews*, *James*, *Peter*, and the *Revelation*, all entirely Jewish. We said to him in those days that all that was left for us who were only Jews inwardly could almost be contained in one of the Bible Society “Portions.” Last week we heard of that dear brother’s death. He died in darkness. He had

given away his Bible to the Jew—its good tidings of great joy,¹⁷⁷ the word of the kingdom,¹⁷⁸ the exceeding great and precious promises¹⁷⁹—he had nothing left. For, while an unlettered man may find the essence of all Scripture in a single verse, he who knows it all, and by a false exegesis puts the greater part away from him, finds that it is such an organic whole that if he gives away the body the life goes with it.



¹⁷⁷ *Luke 2:10.*

¹⁷⁸ *Matthew 13:19.*

¹⁷⁹ *2 Peter 1:4.*

6. It Stands Sure

Present Truth, March 31, 1897

MANY of our readers have doubtless seen advertisements of the “Polychrome Bible,” which is the name of the newest translation of the Bible. It is so called because it is printed in several different colors (the word “polychrome” meaning “many colors”), to indicate the opinions or fancies of the so-called “higher critics” as to the different persons who had a hand in putting the Bible together. Having examined with care two of the three parts that have been issued, namely *Isaiah* and the *Psalms*, we would like to say a few words for the benefit of those who are troubled over the fact of there being so many different translations of the Bible, as well as of those who may feel downcast because the excessively high price of this latest translation makes it practically a prohibited work to the great majority of Bible readers. Some idea of what the Old Testament alone will cost may be gathered from the fact that it is to be complete in twenty volumes, and that the two volumes, *Isaiah* and *Psalms*, are 10s. 6d.¹⁸⁰ Each volume is copiously furnished with notes, and nearly as much space being devoted to them as to the text.

As for the translation itself, it is in the main most excellent. No regard has been paid to any previous translation, the work having been done solely from the Hebrew text by some of the best scholars in the world. It is rendered in excellent modern English, and reads very smoothly. It is really a delight to read the book of *Psalms* in this translation, even if for nothing more than the rhythmical language. One cannot say as much for the book of *Isaiah*, for while the translation is equally good, the translator has so pulled the book to pieces, and rearranged the parts, that one does not know where to turn to find any wished-for passage. Whole chapters have been transposed, while single verses have been gathered out by handfuls and strewn through the text, just as driftwood is left scattered through the fields after a flood. To one

¹⁸⁰ Equivalent to \$115 US Dollars in 2026.

who is familiar with the book as it has stood from the beginning, and who reads for comfort, and not for criticism, the effect is most bewildering and annoying. To try to find the different fragments, and to read them in their consecutive order as in the old, familiar versions, is a work to make as dizzy, and is a well-nigh hopeless task. It is like trying to collect the scattered ruins of a house after a cyclone. An index, however, enables one to find any portion desired. But when one can light upon any considerable portion in the old, familiar position, it is delightful reading. We shall later give a few specimens. One thing we must not fail to give the translators credit for, and that is that whenever they have made any “conjectural emendations,” they have indicated the facts so plainly that no one need be misled into thinking that they belong to the sacred writings.

It has been aptly said that in this “Polychrome Bible” the “higher criticism” appears in its true colors. One cannot read the “Notes” without seeing that the “higher criticism” does not fear God nor regard man.¹⁸¹ To these critics the Bible is simply literature, nothing more. It may be that they do not find personal help in its pages; but one will search the notes in vain to find any indication that they regard it as other than a collection of ancient-Jewish political documents and narratives of doubtful historical value. In the notes to the *Psalms* there are, however, a few exceptions to this statement. In this work the “higher criticism” has put itself on record in a way that cannot be affected by all its professed love for the Bible. As Dr. Parker once said with reference to the work of the “higher critics,” and their claim that was prompted by love for the Bible:

“We never knew a mother to have some much love for her child that she wanted to dissect it.”

People usually dissect things that are dead; and this dissection of the Bible by the “higher critics” shows that they do not regard it as the living Word of God. Or, if perchance they do regard it as

¹⁸¹ *Luke* 18:4.

having life, then their dissection of it living, that is vivisection, shows the utter disregard of its life. It is to them like the rabbit to the vivisector, simply a subject for “scientific” investigation.

And now to the point of all this. We have not written this article for the sake of calling attention to the shortcomings of the “higher critics.” Their unbelief and lack of appreciation for the spiritual realities of the Bible is their own affair, and we have no desire to spend time casting stones at them. What we wish to call attention to is the incalculable service they have rendered the cause of truth by this translation,—a service that could not possibly be rendered by any devout believer.

Here we have a translation as nearly unbiased as it is possible to have done. With no reverence for the Bible, and no prejudice against it, their only objective has been to give the meaning of the Hebrew text as accurately as scholarship could do it. And what is the result? One cannot read the new translation without being struck with its essential likeness to the best translations already existing. Aside from the greater clearness in certain passages, arising from the use of more modern English than in the old version or the *Revision*, and a different way of expressing the same thing, that must necessarily appear in different independent translations, the difference is very slight. All may therefore rest assured that in the familiar renderings so easily procurable by everybody, they have the Bible as it has come to us from the holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If in addition to the translation of 1611 and the *Revision*, one is sufficiently master of one or two modern languages to be able to compare the rendering of the Bible into those tongues, he has practically everything that he can get in the newest translation.

And so the foundation of God stands sure.¹⁸² We gladly welcome every new translation of the Bible, that is really a translation, for every turning over of the Word reveals new duties and allows increased light to shine forth; and we most earnestly ad-

¹⁸² 2 Timothy 2:19.

vise our readers to procure as many different translations as possible, and to read them in unison. No other commentary is needed. The *Revision* is so cheap that there is scarcely any excuse for any person's not having at least that to read in connection with the old. But whoever has only the one may rest assured that nothing is lacking that is essential to make him wise unto salvation.¹⁸³

Last year the British and Foreign Bible Society circulated over 4,000,000 Bibles. Since it started, it has circulated over 150,000,000 copies.

Psalm 119

⁸⁹ For ever, O Lord, your Word is settled in Heaven.



¹⁸³ 2 Timothy 3:15.

7. Current Literature

Present Truth, April 22, 1897

DRAWING his conclusion from the current literature of France, Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia, a popular writer thinks that if the character of their literature indicates the opinion of the educated on the subject of religion, then,

“One would say that religion, in the old sense, had almost died out of Europe.”

If this is true it is because the Bible, overwhelmed in a mass of commentaries and criticisms, has become ancient literature, and is no longer current. But the Bible, whether it be current among the so-called educated or not, is in fact ever modern and up to date, dealing with current events, and those who give to it and its prophecies the most intelligent, faithful, and prayerful study will be the ones who will not be taken by surprise in any of the world crises which the nations must soon meet.

8. The Live Coal from God's Altar

Present Truth, June 3, 1897

WHEN Isaiah saw the vision of the Lord in His temple, “high and lifted up,” he cried,

Isaiah 6

⁵ Woe is me! for I am undone.

He saw his own poverty and nakedness as never before. The Lord wanted someone to go with the message to sinners; but he was...

⁵ ...a man of unclean lips.

Then flew a seraph to him, with a live coal from off the altar of the Lord, and touched his mouth, saying,

⁷ Lo, this has touched your lips and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

Isaiah believed the words, and when he heard the call,

⁸ Who will go?...

—he answered,

⁸ ...Here am I; send me.

And the commission came,

⁹ Go.

Jeremiah 23

²⁹ Is not my word like as a fire? says the Lord.

John 15

³ Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

It was with the living word of God that the prophet's lips were touched. As he believed the word it was his cleansing, and he was ready to go to sinners with it. The very word which the Spirit

uses to convict of sin has power in it to burn away the sin. Thank God for it, and believe it, and hold the life to the Word for constant correction and cleansing. When it is a burning coal direct from God's altar to your lips, you may daily say,

"Here Lord, send me,"

—and the Lord's answer will be,

"Go."

But He sends us to speak only His words.

Jeremiah 23

²⁸ He that has my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord.

²⁹ Is not my word like as a fire?



9. Firmer than Earth

Present Truth, July 15, 1897

THE promise of God cannot be shaken, and the believer can rest securely upon the Everlasting Word even though the earth reels to and fro. It is the lesson to be learned from every shock, now so frequent, warning earth-dwellers that they need to build their hopes on a firmer foundation than temporal things afford. One of our workers in Calcutta speaks as follows of the late earthquake there:

I had been in two slight shocks before, but they were all over in less than a minute, but this one was fully five minutes so that we had ample time to view the results of the shock as they were occurring. I never can forget it so long as I live.

The buildings round seemed like boats on a slightly troubled water, the ground under our feet was too unsettled to stand without stepping in order to keep from falling down. I went up on to the front terrace and looked into the street. The scene was indescribable. The terror-stricken people were running hither and thither, screaming, praying and calling on their gods.

The contrast, as I went down into our yard again and saw the calm features of our little company who stood silently looking at this visible manifestation of God's power before us was marked indeed, and I said in my heart, "Thank the Lord for the Christian's hope." Our house is now undergoing repairs.

10. Sayings of Our Lord

Present Truth, July 22, 1897

THE one portion of these papyri published is a mutilated leaf from a book, purporting to give some of the sayings of Christ. From the style, the writing is dated by the editors about the year 200. Scholars will discuss the genuineness of the sayings with great interest, and doubtless to no profit. It is easy to see how many sayings might pass current in early times, some inventions, some expansions, and the history of later times shows how this grew to lengths in the hands of mystics.

But the Lord has not left us dependent upon human memory. It is a life and death matter, and as Jesus offered himself through the Eternal Spirit for us, so the Holy Spirit left the record of His life and teaching. Many things Jesus did and said were not written, but what is written by prophets and evangelists, speaking by the Holy Spirit, is sufficient to make the man of God...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁷ ...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It is that Word that will judge all in the last day. But the literary world is always more interested in discussing problems than in giving attention to the things assured.

11. The Promises of God

Present Truth, October 21, 1897

A SHORT time ago I picked up a book designed to help Christian workers, and found an outline lesson on “The Promises,” beginning with this statement:

“There are thirty thousand promises in the Bible.”

Some man had evidently been counting, and after patient search had arrived at the round number thirty thousand, and set that down as the sum. That is final, no use in looking for any more; thirty thousand and no more, sums up all the promises of God to man!

Well, thirty thousand is a good many; if all would cheerfully accept, and acknowledge, and thank God for thirty thousand promises, they would have enough employment to keep them from complaining for a long time. Very many people are satisfied, after a fashion, with a very small fraction of that number of promises; one could divide the number given by a thousand, and the result would indicate more promises than they ever claim from the Lord. Because they use so few, they think there are but few.

Men limit God to their own comprehension of Him. That was the trouble with the man who reckoned up thirty thousand promises; that was as many as he knew, and he assumed that the Lord couldn't have promised anything that he didn't know anything about. Let us see if there is any possibility of enlarging the list. What does the Bible say about it?

All God's Thoughts Are Promises

Begin with:

Jeremiah 29

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

This statement was made in connection with a specific promise, and shows us that all the thoughts of God to us are promises of good. Good! Now let us see something about the number of His thoughts toward us.

Turn to *Psalm* 40:5, and read:

Psalm 40

⁵ Many, O Lord my God, are your wonderful works which You have done, and your thoughts which are toward us; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto You; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Then they are more than thirty thousand, for it would not take very long to count that many. But read again:

Psalm 139

¹⁷ How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I should count them, *they are more in number than the sand.*

That man who counted thirty thousand promises, can begin again where he left off, and count for very many years to come, yea, throughout eternity, and then he will not have exhausted the list.

One great trouble is, that we do not recognize promises when we see them, just as there are millions of blessings that we never recognize as such, but often call them calamities instead. If we remember that every thought of God to us includes a promise to us, we shall begin to ponder the thoughts of God with more interest. And when we think of this, we shall see that it means that...

The Commands of God Are Promises

Let us test this in one representative case, that is all-inclusive. The ten commandments begin thus:

Exodus 20

² I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ You shall have no other gods before me.

This commandment includes all the rest. Read now in the 81st *Psalms*, and you will see what God means when He says, “You shall.” Read verses 8-10:

Psalms 81

⁸ Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto you: O Israel, if you will hearken unto me;

⁹ There shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god.

¹⁰ I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

This is parallel to:

Isaiah 55

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.

In the Hebrew there is but one word for “hear” and “obey.” To *hear*, is to *obey*. That is because...

Hebrews 4 [RV]

¹² ...the word of God is living and active.

It is self-fulfilling. Let it find a place in the mind, and it will manifest itself openly. When God says,

Exodus 20

³ You shall have no other gods before me,

—He does not mean that we must make Him our God; far from it. The effort to make God our God, can result in nothing else but the worshiping of a false God,—a god no greater nor better than our own feeble comprehension. God knows this, and so His promise is,

“I will be their God.”¹⁸⁴

So as we read *Psalms* 81:8-10 we see that when God said,

¹⁸⁴ *Genesis* 17:8; *Jeremiah* 24:7, 32:38; *Ezekiel* 11:20, 37:23, 27; *Zechariah* 8:8; *2 Corinthians* 6:16.

Exodus 20

³ You shall have no other gods before me,

–He meant simply this:

“Listen to me; meditate upon my words, and I will take upon myself the responsibility of seeing that there are no strange gods found among you.”

An Illustration

A father says to his son,

“John, my boy, is that the best pair of boots you have? You must not wear them any more.”

The mother looks at the little girl’s soiled and worn-out frock, and says,

“You shall not wear that any more.”

What do John and Mary do? Do they begin to worry or to cry, and say,

“Father and mother say that we must not and shall not wear these clothes any more; what in the world shall we do? We are too young and weak to earn any others, and shall have to go naked. I think they are very hard in their commands.”

Do they talk like that? Not a bit of it. They have no other thought but that their parents have promised them some new clothes, and they at once begin to rejoice. Even so it should be with us, when our Heavenly Father says to us,

“Those old clothes of yours are too dirty and ragged;¹⁸⁵ they are not fit to be seen; you shall not wear them any more.”

Instead of complaining at the hardness of God’s commandments, we should rather greatly rejoice because of His promise to clothe us with the garments of salvation, and cover us with the robe of righteousness.

¹⁸⁵ *Isaiah* 64:6.

Isaiah 61

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful.¹⁸⁶ The commandment of God, in the hands of the Spirit, makes us see how terribly deficient we are; but that is not all; it shows us the deficiency only in order that we may take that which will supply all our need, even that which shows us our lack. For the Spirit convicts of righteousness at the same time that He convicts of sin.

John 16

⁸ And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

When God tells us that we are sinners, He is simply telling us that He has the righteousness for us that we lack. When we know this, we can with David rejoice in the law of God, because...

1 John 5

³ His commandments are not grievous.

¹⁸⁶ *Romans 7:13.*

1898–1899



Jesus as a Youth, explaining the Scriptures to His Parents

1. God's Revelation of Himself

Present Truth, February 3, 1898

Subtitle: How the Indians Received the Light

ONE of Mr. Egerton R. Young's stories of missionary work among the Cree Indians of North America, on his experience in teaching the Indians how to read, as told in *On the Indian's Trail*, is most interesting as a tribute to the power of the simple Bible story of creation without any being evaporated by "higher criticism." He had drilled the Indians on the syllable characters until they were quite familiar with them, using a large, white rock and a burnt stick instead of a blackboard and chalk, and had filled them with amazement by letting them read the name of God on the rock, together with such simple combinations as "God is love," and "God loves you." He continues:

Then we opened our bundles of Bibles, and passing them round as far as they would go, I had them all turn to the first verse of the first chapter of *Genesis*. After some explanation of a few additional signs which they there saw upon the printed page, and which give some variation to the sound of the syllabic character to which they are attached, we began the study of the verse. Of course our progress at first was slow. It could not be otherwise under such circumstances. But we patiently persevered, and it was not very long ere they were able to read in their own language: "MAWACHE NISTUM KAESAMANETO KEOOSETON KESIH MENA ASHER." (In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.)

When they had acquired the ability to read this verse for themselves, and had grasped a little of its meaning, there was another outburst of delight. That first verse of *Genesis* is very suggestive and full of meaning to anyone, no matter how learned, who tries to investigate it. It is in itself the first chapter of God's revelation of himself to man, and has long occupied the attention and study of the most godly and profound. Here, for the first time, it was being read by a company of poor Indians just emerging from paganism. But they were sharp and keen, and able to grasp a new

truth; and so when the first verse opened before them with its wondrous meaning, great was their delight and amazement.

“Now we know all about it!” some of them shouted. “The Kaesa-Mancto (the great God) made all these things, the heaven and the earth.”

Others said:

“Our fathers talked about it in their wigwams, and wondered, and wondered how all these things came as they are; but they had to confess that they were in darkness, and knew nothing. But now we know it! We know it!”

Over and over again they read the verse until they had thoroughly committed it to memory. And in after days, at many a camp fire and in many a hunting lodge, it was repeated to others who had not heard it, but who, on hearing it were also filled with gratification and delight at the answer which it gave to what had long been a subject of perplexity and awe.

Thus we see the demonstration of the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

2. Lighting Up the Sun

Present Truth, August 25, 1898

THE other day I came upon a man who was rubbing two dry sticks together.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“I am trying to throw light upon the dark spots in the sun,” was the reply.

“Ah, I hadn’t noticed that there were any dark spots in the sun; to me it seems to be only light; have you seen them?”

“No; but I have been told that they are there.”

“Well, my friend, don’t you know that if you succeed in getting light out of your dry sticks, it will after all be only a bit of light from the sun, and that since all light is from the sun, you can throw no light upon it? Don’t imagine that you can manufacture light.”

Which thing is an allegory, born of the statement that Dean Farrar is working upon a volume, which...

...will not be an ordinary commentary on the New Testament, but will throw light on dark and difficult texts.

Where will he get the light which he has to throw on these dark texts? Will he manufacture it? If so, if it be that he has light in himself for the people, why does he not throw it directly on the people, instead of on the “dark texts” which, if they have no light in themselves are not worth lighting up?

This is not a drive at Dean Farrar, nor a play upon words, but an endeavor to bring the reader’s attention sharply to the fact that the Word of God is itself light.

Proverbs 6

²³ For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.

No one can throw light upon it, but must receive from it all the light he ever has.

Psalm 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.

To talk of throwing light upon the Bible, or any part of it, is as absurd as to talk of throwing light upon the sun. Yea, more so, for the light which the sun has is only that which it has received from the Word of the Lord.

There are no “dark texts” in the Bible. There are indeed things that are “hard to be understood,”¹⁸⁷ and things that are difficult to our comprehension; but the trouble is not in the texts, but in us. If we cannot see, that is an evidence that we cannot see, and not that the sun does not shine. Let every one disabuse himself of the idea that any man can throw light on the Bible, for then the Bible is put down as less than man. In that case man is the judge and maker of the Word, instead of its disciple. What we all need to pray is,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

If you don’t see light in any text, know that the difficulty is in your vision, not in God’s Word. If...

1 John 2

²⁷ ...the anointing which we have received of Him...

—abides in us, we shall be able to see. If any man wills to do, he shall know as much as is necessary for him to know.¹⁸⁸ When we...

1 John 1

⁷ ...walk in the light as He is in the light,

—we shall be able to see light in His light.¹⁸⁹ Simple belief is the best and only “introduction to the study of the Bible.”

¹⁸⁷ 2 Peter 3:16.

¹⁸⁸ John 7:17.

¹⁸⁹ Psalm 36:9.

3. Turned unto Fables

Present Truth, April 27, 1899

IN THE charge which the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy, the Spirit of God has spoken directly to every minister of the Gospel concerning his duty, and has at the same time foretold a condition which we see quite fully developed in the church at the present time. Here is the inspired charge:

2 Timothy 4 [RV]

¹ I charge you in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom;

² Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts;

⁴ And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.

A most literal fulfillment of this last statement is furnished by the pastor and congregation of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York, USA. A new man has just been called to succeed Dr. Lyman Abbott, who recently resigned, and in order to make the Sunday evening services popular, he has adopted the plan of selecting themes and characters from popular novels, instead of the Bible.

Three of his recent, sermons were founded on Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*; Hugo's *Les Miserables*, and one of George Eliot's novels. The innovation won popular approval, and the church was crowded, the congregation being intensely stirred by the pathos of the stories. The Brooklyn booksellers are doing enormous business owing to the demand for the standard novels used in the sermons.

This is not an isolated instance. The writer calls to mind a series of ten sermons that were preached a few years ago by a popular clergyman from Poe's *Raven*; and similar cases are of frequent oc-

currence. See the quotation from *The Christian*, on page 263 of this week's *Present Truth*.¹⁹⁰ It is true that no sensationalism is there reported, but out of twenty sermons listened to, in only three of them was there...

...any approach to a clear statement of the Gospel way of salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor was there any reference to the necessity of conversion, nor to the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is also stated that there is very little in the sermons we now hear, to convince of sin, and to lead to genuine repentance and conversion. Why is this? Simply because the time has already come when men will not endure the sound doctrine. Solid Bible teaching is at a discount, and when men turn away their ears from the truth, the very next thing is to turn to fables. But just as light is most needed when it is darkest, so whom men turn away from the truth to fables is there the more need of faithful preaching of the Word.

¹⁹⁰ See Appendix, *The Modern Sermon*.

4. Preach the Word

Present Truth, June 1, 1899

Isaiah 60

² Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.

ERROR abounds on every hand. Men refuse light, and because of this they are left to believe a lie.¹⁹¹ They loved darkness better than light.¹⁹² By their actions they say,

Isaiah 28

¹⁵ We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

The Gospel comes to them as a message of life. It comes to them with a warning that when the...

¹⁸ ...overflowing scourge shall pass through, [they] shall be trodden down by it;

¹⁷ [For] the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding place.

This message the Lord has committed to men, and the charge is...

2 Timothy 4

² *Preach the WORD.*

Why? Because...

John 17

¹⁷ Your Word is TRUTH.

That is the only sure foundation. That is the rock on which the house was founded that the storm could not sweep away.

Psalms 91

⁴ His *truth* shall be your shield and buckler.

Definite as is this charge to “preach the Word,” and the Word only, yet have you ever noticed how often the messengers make

¹⁹¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:11.

¹⁹² John 3:19.

the mistake of telling what the Gospel *is not* instead of what it is? This is a trick of the devil. He knows that time spent in debating, and arguing *about* the truth, and time spent in “answering objections” will never save anyone. This being so, it seems as though it was his studied purpose to go about the churches and elsewhere among religious people with a chip on his shoulder; and he is never so happy as when he can induce some overzealous, inexperienced, or pugnacious theologian to turn aside from preaching Christ and Him crucified, and devote his attention to knocking the chip off his Satanic majesty’s shoulder. The very best way to worry the devil is to pay no attention to that chip, but instead to go right forward faithfully preaching the Word. Why not? The most successful way to combat error is to preach the truth. Get the truth in the *heart*, and then the heresy will leave the head.

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the Word.



5. The Fruit of Higher Criticism

Present Truth, June 1, 1899

DR. L. W. MUNHALL, an American evangelist, spoke lately of the way in which infidelity, under the title of “the higher criticism,” is establishing itself in the pulpit. Professors of theology who are not themselves converted by the sanctifying influence of the truth, find the criticism more to their taste than simple obedience and surrender to the living Word, and as a result the ministry is becoming permeated with men who know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. Dr. Munhall said:

Nearly every objection raised against the integrity of the Bible by the present day higher critics can be found in Voltaire’s works, and Paine’s *Age of Reason*. The plan of the battle has changed. The enemy used to be outside the breastworks; now he is inside—in our own pulpits, in our educational institutions and editorial chairs; and the weapons used against the Book are the very same the infidels have always used.

I know that in two of our theological schools the Old Testament professors are giving their students all the objections against the integrity of the record, and making no attempt whatever to answer such objections; and these students are going out to fill our pulpits with little or no knowledge of the Bible, their minds filled with objections to the Book which the Church commissions them to expound. Can we reasonably expect spiritual results from the ministry of such men?

I know of one of these young men who, within four years of his graduation, left the Methodist Episcopal Church, became pastor of a Congregational Church, then pastor of a Unitarian Church, and then a blatant infidel, all in the same town.

A wealthy member of our church told me: “I sent my eldest son to a Methodist educational institution not 300 miles from New York city. Before he left home he was considered by all who knew him to be a model Christian young man. While at school he came under the influence of a certain professor who is a higher critic. He returned home an infidel, and has not once been inside a church since.”

6. A Mystery Revealed

Present Truth, July 6, 1899

LORD KELVIN, who is a recognized authority on Mathematics and Physical Science, has lately been tracing the probable history of the earth (according to geology) from its origin up to the time of the creation of living things. Of this latter he says:

Mathematics and dynamics fall short when we contemplate the earth, fitted for life but lifeless, and try to imagine the commencement of life upon it. This did not take place by any action of chemistry, or electricity, or crystalline grouping of molecules, under the influences of force, or by any possible kind of fortuitous concourse of atoms. We must pause face to face with the mystery and miracle of the creation of living creatures.

When men leave the plain, simple statements of the Bible regarding creation, their reasonings and speculations soon get them into a labyrinth of mystery that mathematics or dynamics cannot solve. But there need be no guess-work as to how the earth came into existence, or of the “creation of living creatures.”

Psalm 33

⁶ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.

It was God’s word that did it all—not only the heavens and the earth, but the creation of living creatures as well.

Genesis 1

²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast after his kind: *and it was so.*

There it is, so plain, that a child can understand it, and the greatest worldly-wise man living knows no more of fact. Guessing is not fact, nor is speculation truth.

7. How to Be Strong

Present Truth, August 10, 1899

WE HEARD a sister say the other day,

“I wish I knew how I could be a *strong* Christian.”

She is not the only one who longs to be a Christian with strength sufficient to withstand the temptations of the devil.

Now let us look at the matter in the simplest way. When we wish to become strong physically, we eat the right kind of food, and take proper exercise. Spiritual life is not much different from physical life, so far as its healthful maintenance is concerned. Christian strength is obtained in just this way. First there must be proper food—and that is, *the truth*. And what is that?

John 17

¹⁷ Your Word is truth.

Then study the Scriptures with the heart open to receive the light that God will cause to shine into your soul. When the light comes, cherish it as you would a lighted candle on a dangerous roadway. Put its precepts at once into practice in your life.

It may be that it will require the forsaking of many former ways, and the giving up of many cherished idols, but *do it*, no matter what the sacrifice.

- Eve was driven from the garden because she listened to the words of Satan rather than the command of the Lord.
- Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt because she “looked back” toward Sodom, contrary to the Lord’s express command.
- Joseph and Daniel and his three companions were strong to stand for the right in a great crisis, because they stood by principles every day in the ordinary duties of life.

There is nothing that begets weakness like hesitating when there must be a decision between right and wrong. So if you want

to be a *strong* Christian, the first thing is to know what God requires, and then promptly, and without hesitation, do that thing. Remember that...

1 Samuel 15

²² To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

8. Simplicity

Present Truth, August 31, 1899

Original title: Back Page

IT IS not great learning and wisdom that gives a person knowledge of the Bible, but it is knowledge of God's Word that gives wisdom and understanding.

The Lord makes everything so simple and this is one reason why men do not come to the knowledge of the truth and accept salvation,—it is so simple, and yet infinite. Men know that it must be a mighty thing, and so they think that it cannot be found in simplicity. Yet the least thing that God has made is mighty and shows forth His power. There is no simple thing that does not show the everlasting power and divinity of God just as much as the sun or the planets. In simplest things God reveals His infinite salvation.

9. A Poor Memory and a Good One

Present Truth, September 7, 1899

MANY people complain, when the Word of God is preached to them, or when they read it, that they have such poor memories that they cannot retain it, nor call it to mind. Well, it is a fact that people have by nature very poor memories, but not in the way that they think. Their memories are poor in that they forget things that they ought to remember, and remember very vividly the things that they ought to forget.

The man who says that his memory is so poor that he cannot possibly remember a text of Scripture, nor where it is found, will recall with the utmost minuteness of detail every word and act of somebody whom he thinks has injured or meant to injure him; and he will, even months and years afterward, tell exactly where everything occurred or was said. Is not that in truth a poor memory, which forgets the good things, and remembers only that which is bad? It would really be better to have no memory at all. Such a person needs to cultivate the art of forgetting fully as much as that of remembering.

Now there is a perfect remedy for this kind of memory, and that is to...

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

His mind is the mind of the Spirit. If we have that mind, the Spirit himself will be our memory, bringing to our remembrance all things that the Lord has said.¹⁹³

That is good, but it is not all. God says of His people,

Hebrews 8

¹² Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

¹⁹³ *John 14:26.*

Therefore if we let Him put His mind in us, we shall not remember the evil things that have been said and done against us, or against anybody else. That is a good memory. Get it, and you will find it a continual delight, for the Word of Christ will dwell in you richly in all wisdom,¹⁹⁴ so that you will continually sing with grace in your heart unto the Lord.¹⁹⁵



¹⁹⁴ *Colossians* 3:16.

¹⁹⁵ *Ephesians* 5:19.

10. The Bible and the Jews

Present Truth, September 14, 1899

THE opposition to the Jews is becoming more and more systematic, and is being pursued with zeal in almost every country. Indeed, it may be said that in none of the great nations of the earth, except in England, is a Jew on absolutely equal footing with people of other nationalities.

The anti-Jewish feeling in Russia is so well known as to need no comment; in France it is the all absorbing theme; in Germany a conference of Anti-Semites is soon to be held, at which steps are to be taken for more vigorously pursuing the work of opposition to the despised race to which Jesus of Nazareth belonged; and news comes that two Jewish cadets have recently been obliged to leave the Military Academy, at West Point, USA, on account of the persistent persecution to which they were subjected. The unreasoning prejudice is said to have been carried so far that life in the Academy was made unbearable for another young man, not a Jew, because he found his Jewish mess mate a pleasant companion, and liked his society.

Unjust and unreasonable as all this is, we can see in it some evidences of the fulfillment of the wish expressed by the leaders of the Jews when at the trial of Christ before Pilate they cried out,

Matthew 27

²⁵ His blood be on us, and on our children!

We do not mean by this that God is vindictively punishing that people for the act of their forefathers. God is not vindictive. The curse causeless does not come.¹⁹⁶ Every curse that comes upon men or nations is the direct consequence, the natural result, of some cause. We are not concerned now to trace this cause and effect in the case of the Jews; it is sufficient to call attention to the fact.

¹⁹⁶ *Proverbs 26:2.*

The anti-Jewish crusade in Germany is taking a turn quite to be expected, and which will doubtless extend to other countries. One of their leaders proposes agitating against the use of the Old Testament as a religious book in the schools.

He considers that it is a book written by Jews for Jews and he maintains that the history of the Jewish patriarchs, kings, and prophets, forms no part of Christian religious instruction.

From what we know of the position taken by many professed Christians, with regard to at least a portion of the Old Testament, we are sure that this new movement will find the way prepared for its quite general acceptance, and the results will be most disastrous to those accepting it.

In the first place it ought to be understood that the Old Testament is no more a Jewish book than is the New. All the writers of the New Testament, with the possible exception of Luke, were Jews, so that whoever would throw away the Old Testament on the ground of its being a Jewish book must in consistency throw away the New Testament also; and this will be the inevitable result in so far as the proposed movement finds acceptance.

Not only was the New Testament written by Jews, but it was written *for* the Jews just as much as the Old Testament was. The *Epistle of James* is addressed...

James 1

¹ ...to the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad.

Peter was the Apostle of Circumcision, and Paul declared that the Gospel which he preached—the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes—was...

Romans 1

¹⁶ ...to the Jew first.

On the other hand, we find that Jeremiah, who wrote the longest book of the Old Testament, was specially chosen and ordained

by the Lord as the prophet to the Gentiles.¹⁹⁷ The word “nations” in this verse is the same as Gentiles; but even without this explanation, the word “nations” shows that his mission was not limited to any one people.

Christ was...

Romans 1

³ ...born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

He himself declared that...

John 4

²² ...salvation is of the Jews.

Whoever therefore throws away the Old Testament because it is Jewish, must on the same ground throw away Christ and His salvation. Indeed, this necessarily follows, whether one intends it or not; for Christ said,

John 5

⁴⁶ Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

In the early centuries of the Christian era there was great opposition to the Jews, on the part of professed Christians. This race prejudice led to many changes in the church. It was one great cause for the exchanging of the Jewish Passover festival for the Pagan Easter, and celebrating it always upon Sunday instead of on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month, regardless of the day of the week, as was the original order. This of course was part of the movement which substituted Sunday for the Sabbath, the remark of Constantine,

“Let us have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd,”

¹⁹⁷ *Jeremiah 1:5.*

–showing the real ground of that change. Of course the Sabbath is not Jewish, any more than the Bible is; but prejudice never takes facts into account.

Exodus 20

¹⁰ The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God,

–and is for all men just as much as is the commandment,

⁷ You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

The rejection of the Old Testament means really the rejection of God himself.

In this connection it should be noted that “Judaism” is a thing entirely distinct from the religion of the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul said that he had before his conversion to Christianity made advancement “in the Jews’ religion”¹⁹⁸ beyond others of his own age, and this advancement was due to the fact that he was...

Galatians 1

¹⁴ ...more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers.

These traditions were not drawn from the Bible, but on the contrary made the commandment of God of none effect.¹⁹⁹

Matthew 15

⁹ In vain do they worship me, [said the Lord,] teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The Jews in the time of Christ did not believe the Bible, and it is exceedingly rare to find one now who does.

2 Corinthians 3

¹⁵ Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts.

This, however is no more true of the Jews than it is of the most of those who are for statistical purposes, grouped under the name

¹⁹⁸ *Galatians* 1:13-14.

¹⁹⁹ *Matthew* 15:3-9.

Christians.

Luke 18

⁸ When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?

It will be a rare commodity, yet it will be found, for faith, hope, and love abide for ever,²⁰⁰ and just before the Lord comes, and at the time of His appearing, there will be found people of whom the Lord himself can say,

Revelation 14

¹² Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

There will be great faith manifested by a few, and wherever it is found there will be perfect obedience to the commandments of God, with a total disregard of the traditions of men.

The spirit that is shown in the persecution of the Jews today is identical with that manifested by the Jews themselves in the persecution of Christ nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and the results will be the same.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:13.

²⁰¹ PP Editor's note: Waggoner's comment here is prescient. It was to be about another 40 years until the Holocaust began in Nazi Germany.

11. Walk in the Light

Present Truth, September 21, 1899

IT IS said that when Galileo discovered, with a telescope of very moderate magnifying power, four of the five moons of Jupiter, and announced the fact to his friends, they were very skeptical. Some said the moons must be in the telescope, for they were not in the sky, while others refused even to look through the telescope lest they should be convinced.

The attitude of these last especially, is so like that assumed by many toward God's truth. They refuse to investigate for fear they will find that their way is not God's way. They argue,

"Father and mother believed this way; they were good people, and will be saved. If I live up to the light they had, I shall be saved. Why need I change?"

This is a trick of the devil.

Proverbs 4

¹⁸ The path of the just...shines more and more unto the perfect day.

Truth is light, but a ray rejected is a ray lost, and to just that extent is the light dimmed. Truth does not stand still. It is progressive. The command is,

John 12

³⁵ Walk [keep moving] while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

There was a time when God winked at that the ignorance of the people, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent,²⁰²—accept all the light that shines on their pathway.

But why assume this attitude when it is the truth and the truth only that can save any man? Why deceive ourselves? Strange as

²⁰² Acts 17:30.

it seems, there is a reason for it. In us there is no good thing,²⁰³ and though we know it, yet we dislike to acknowledge it, especially when the “hidden works of darkness”²⁰⁴ are to be brought to light. We know we are bad, but we dislike to have other people know how bad we are, and so think to keep our wickedness hid by refusing the light. But this the Saviour says is our condemnation—

John 3

¹⁹ ...that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Oh, why will man be so blinded to their best interests? What if they have sinned? That has all been made right long ago.

Isaiah 40

¹ Comfort you, comfort you, my people...

² ...and cry unto her,...that her iniquity is pardoned.

All that remains is for the sinner to accept the pardon, and the Lord says, He will...

Micah 7

¹⁹ ...cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,

Jeremiah 31

³⁴ ...[and] remember them no more forever.²⁰⁵

Christ is the way, the life, and the truth.²⁰⁶ The truth makes a man free,²⁰⁷ and whom the Son makes free is free indeed.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ *Romans 7:18.*

²⁰⁴ *1 Corinthians 4:5.*

²⁰⁵ *Isaiah 64:9.*

²⁰⁶ *John 14:6.*

²⁰⁷ *John 8:32.*

²⁰⁸ *John 8:36.*

12. Science Falsely So-called

Present Truth, September 28, 1899

FROM the *Daily Mail* of the 18th we take the following:

How is the age of the earth to be guessed? Sir Archibald Geikie did his best at Dover on Saturday to show to the geological section of the British Association how approximate guesses might be hazarded. We may note the geological and biological changes that have taken, and are still taking place, and by comparing the results may arrive at some reasonable estimate.

In most the most ancient of the sedimentary registers of the earth's history there is no evidence of colossal floods, tides, or denudation, but on the contrary, incontrovertible proof of continuous orderly deposition, such as may be seen today in any part of the globe. One hundred millions of years, Sir Archibald thought, would suffice for that small portion of the earth's history which is registered in the stratified rocks of the crust.

The honorable savant is very liberal, however. Although he thinks that one hundred million years is time enough for the history of the earth hitherto, yet according to the *Chronicle's* report, if the paleontologists find such a period too narrow for their requirements, he saw no reason from the geological side why they should not be at liberty to enlarge it as far as they may find it needful for the evolution of organized existence on the globe.

And nobody laughed, so far as we can learn. These guesses and this liberal distribution of time of which he had no knowledge, and over which he had no control, were all "science," and so must be received with becoming gravity. Anything rather than accept the Word of God. So they go on saying,

2 Peter 3

⁴ All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,

—willingly ignorant of the Word of the Lord which, if they would devote half the energy in studying it that they spend in

profitless and foolish guessing, would make them wise not only in the things that have been, but in the things that are to come.

2 Peter 3

³ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

⁴ 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.

⁵ For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

⁶ Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

1900



Luther discovers the Latin Bible in Erfurt University Library

1. Strengthening the Mind

Present Truth, January 4, 1900

Original title: Back Page

IN A recent article of advice to the young with regard to reading, Mr. James Bryce said:

To know even one subject pretty thoroughly is a great gain to a man. It gives him something to think about apart from his daily occupations. It forms in him the habit of sound criticism, and enables him, even in subjects with which he has only a speaking acquaintance, to detect imposture, and discover when a writer is really competent.

This is true, and it is really the secret of sound wisdom and understanding; for he who does not know one thing well, cannot know very much about anything. It is not the amount of different facts that one has stored in his memory, that makes him a truly educated man, but the ability to discriminate, and to detect truth from error. This discipline can be obtained only by the concentrated application necessary to master some one thing.

This is true to a degree, no matter what the subject be; but it is pre-eminently true when the subject is the truth of the Gospel, as revealed in the Bible. The Bible is the simplest of all books, yet it deals with the deepest of all things—the deep things of God.²⁰⁹ Nothing else can broaden and strengthen one's mind so much as the conscientious study of the Bible. Nothing else can so quicken one's powers of discernment, for it covers every possible range of thought. For the proof of this, we are not dependent on the statement of Mr. Bryce, for we have the example of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, whose wisdom was greater than that of Solomon,²¹⁰ and whose sole school was the Word of God.

²⁰⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:10.

²¹⁰ Matthew 12:42.

2. Going to Extremes

Present Truth, January 4, 1900

THIS is one of the things that most people are afraid of. To say of a man that he is “an extremist,” is to set him down as an unsafe man, one in whose words it will not do to place much confidence. “Extreme positions” are usually considered as dangerous as a rocky coast is to a sailor. Especially are “extremes” in matters of religion by common consent held to be the worst sort of folly. The one who goes to extreme positions in religion is generally called a fanatic—or an enthusiast. Concerning the matter of belief in God, and justification by faith, the writer has often heard it said,

“Yes; faith is all right, and the doctrine of justification by faith is well enough, but one must not carry it to extremes.”

Now it makes all the difference in the world in what road one is. It may be the worst possible thing, to go to extremes, and on the other hand, it may be the very best. If one is in the way of sin, it is certainly best not to go to the extreme, that is, to the end of it; for the end of that way is death. He should get out of that way as soon as possible. The further one goes in it, the worse it is for him. But if one be in the way of righteousness, then he should by all means follow it to the extreme; for the end of that way is life everlasting. The farther one goes in the way of righteousness, the better it is for him. When we consider that the extreme means simply the end, the farthest extent of a thing, it is easy to see how foolish, and even wicked, is the idea that an extreme position in that which is good is to be avoided. It is impossible to go to too great an extreme in the way of righteousness—in keeping the commandments of God. The Pharisees were very scrupulous, extremely particular, in their observance of the law, yet Christ said,

Matthew 5

²⁰ Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It is impossible to have “too much of a good thing,” when that good thing is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, by the way, the Lord Jesus is himself an extremist, and one must go to extremes if he comes to Him. He says,

Revelation 22

¹³ I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

In Christ, therefore, extremes meet, and we must go to them or else fail utterly. It is the curse of the professed church of Christ, today, that its members are so fearful of extremes in real Christianity. They halt between two opinions, inclining toward the good, but fearful of carrying it too far. They are so fearful of fanaticism, that they never rise to the level of perfect faith.

Be it known that true faith never leads to fanaticism. It is true that we very often see a man begin in faith and end in fanaticism, but that is because he leaves the faith. He is like a locomotive that has left the line. If it had kept the line, it would have been all right. It is possible for a man to lose the faith, and then any sort of fanaticism may be expected of him. He will then go to extremes that will be ruinous; but so long as he keeps to the line of faith, he is safe no matter how far he goes; the farther he goes the better.

How shall we avoid wrong extremes? Easily enough: stick to the Word of God; hold fast to it. In it there is perfect safety. Run in that way as fast and as far as you can. Say with the Psalmist,

Psalm 119

¹¹² I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes, for ever, even unto the end,

—be extreme, and do not fear what people may say about you.

It is worth while, in this connection, to stop a moment upon the word “enthusiast.” An enthusiast is one who has enthusiasm, and enthusiasm means filled with God. An enthusiast is one who has God in him. Another name for such a one is “zealot.” Jesus was a true enthusiast. He said,

John 2

¹⁷ The zeal of your house has eaten me up.

Do not, then, be afraid of names, but hold fast to right principles as far as they will carry you.

Galatians 4

¹⁸ It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.



3. The Obedience of Faith

Present Truth, April 5, 1900

Original title: Back Page

SOMEONE has said:

“Men who mean to keep growing must have some specific work to do.”

That is true, but it is not the whole. It should be added that they must have some responsibility laid on them—always something to do that is just a little beyond their present capacity. Then with trust in God they will find that they will always be growing. The man who shirks any work that is given him to do, is himself the loser.

Many people have the mistaken idea that faith is a substitute for obedience. It is a very erroneous and dangerous notion. It is impossible for one to have so much faith in the Lord as to be saved by it while neglecting any known duty. Paul received grace and apostleship...

Romans 16

²⁶ ...for the obedience of faith among all nations.

Anything called faith, which ignores or slights any portion of God's Word is spurious.

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

4. Israel's Flowery Land

Present Truth, May 3, 1900

WHEN speaking to the Children of Israel of the goodly land to which the Lord was leading them, Moses described it as...

...a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills,” and “that drinks water of the rain of heaven;” the result being that it was “a land of wheat and barley, of vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack anything in it.”

Dr. MacMillan has given the following interesting description of the present beauty of the Land of Palestine due especially to the quantity and variety of the flowers that bloom there:

The Jews of old fed among the lilies, for their land was pre-eminently the flowery land. It merited that name far more than China, which has usurped the title. Though not larger than the six northern counties of England, Palestine possesses 2,500 species of flowering plants, or nearly twice as many as occur in the British Islands. Dr. Tristram calls it “the Garden of Eden run wild.” Every traveler is struck with the immense profusion, variety and brilliancy of the flowers. In the early months of the year the ground is not seen for the multitude of them.

The flowering season lasts only a very few weeks; but during this period crowds of brightly-tinted blossoms flourish in luxuriant succession day after day, like the wonderful mountain flora which rushes up as if by magic on the pastures of the Alps in May or June, and fringes the limits of eternal snow with a rainbow loveliness. All the flowers of Palestine have very much the general look of spring or Alpine flowers, and owe their fresh and brilliant appearance to the same cause.

The Land of Promise was called “a land flowing with milk and honey.” Its abundance of milk depended upon the rich verdure of its fields in spring; while its profusion of honey was owing to the

immense quantity and variety of its flowers. And as it is well known that these and other insects are allured, in their search for the sweet juices upon which they feed, by bright colors and fragrant odors—those very qualities which render flowers so attractive to our senses—to certain plants in order to aid in fertilizing them; so we can trace the connection between the splendid flora of Palestine and its enormous production of honey. The bright flowers favored the increase of the bees, and the bees favored the increase of the bright flowers. And in this way the country was beautified and enriched, until it became one great garden of the Lord—was made musical with the hum of bees, and gay with the laugh of flowers. The scenery might be featureless and destitute of grandeur, but the flowers by their abundance and beauty imparted to it the form and color that were wanting.

God did not neglect the bright adornment of flowers on the table which He had prepared and richly furnished for His people. That *Beulah* land which they married was bountifully decorated, like a bride, with the appropriate ornaments. That second Eden had not only every tree that was good for food, but also every tree to be desired for its beauty. Among these beautiful lilies the idyllic life of the people was spent, and there loveliness and fragrance entered insensibly into their souls, and formed their character; while they cheered and graced their common toil in the fields and the pleasant relaxation of their festivals.



5. Living Truth

Present Truth, May 17, 1900

Original title: Back Page

THE knowledge of truth is gained only by sacrifice, by heart struggles, and soul surrender to God.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

Truth is for use, and no one really knows it except the one who has received it into his life, allowing it to drive out some cherished sin. Wisdom—Christ—says:

Proverbs 1

²³ Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you,
I will make known my words unto you.

Truth is that which delivers us from the error of our ways, and it comes to us in our struggle against sin. When we long for righteousness, resisting even unto blood, striving against sin, then it is that the deepest truths shine forth most brightly. Dr. Bonar has well said:

Great truths are greatly won, not found by chance,
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream;
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.
Not in the general mart, 'mid corn and wine,
Not in the merchandise of gold and gems,
Not in the world's gay hall of midnight mirth,
Not in the blaze of regal disdains.
But in the day of conflict, fear and grief,
When the strong hand of God put forth in might,
Plows up the subsoil of the stagnant heart
And brings the imprisoned truth-seed to the light.
Wrung from the troubled spirit, in hard hours
Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain,
Truth springs like harvest from the well-ploughed field,
And the soul feels it has not wept in vain.

6. Believing a Lie

Present Truth, May 24, 1900

Proverbs 10

¹⁹ In the multitude of words there wants not sin.

THIS proverb is often illustrated by speakers who have a great flow of words without a proportionate fund of right thoughts. For instance, in one of the May meetings a zealous speaker asserted that:

“It is better to believe a lie with intensity than to believe nothing at all.”

But a lie is wholly bad, and cannot therefore be better than anything else. Moreover, it is impossible for anybody not to believe anything; whoever does not believe the truth, necessarily believes a lie; there is no neutral ground. And the more intensely one believes a lie, the worse it is for him and everybody with whom he comes in contact.

7. Walk While You Have the Light

Present Truth, June 7, 1900

Original title: Back Page

PEOPLE talk about seeking after light: but such a thing is wholly unnecessary. Light is everywhere, except where it is shut out. Men are not obliged to go in search for sunlight for their dwellings; they have only to open the blinds, and let the light shine in. The way to get more light from the Lord is to use what we have. There is not much inducement to give food to a child that is crying and begging for it while it has some already in its hands, which it refuses to eat. So when people have some light, no matter how little; and will not walk in it, with what confidence can they ask God to give them more light?

John 12

³⁵ Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

³⁶ While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.



8. What Do You Believe

Present Truth, June 7, 1900

LATELY a person said to me, "I cannot believe." She could not believe that God would save her.

"Doesn't He say that He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" was the question.

"Yes, He says so."

"Ah, then, the trouble is that God is such a known liar that you cannot believe His Word; is that the case?"

"Oh, no; I believe God's Word; I believe that He speaks truth," was the reply.

"Ah, yes, I see: you know that God tells the truth, but nevertheless you cannot believe what He says. That is, you are so constituted that you cannot believe what you know to be the truth! That is most illogical and astonishing. What a strange creature you are; you don't believe that God forgives you, although He says that He does, and you know that He speaks the truth. You believe, in other words, that He does not forgive your sins. That is to say, you are so constituted that you cannot believe the truth, but you can believe a lie! Whoever heard of anything so absurd?"

What more is there to be said? Is it not evident that unbelief of God's Word is the most unreasonable and senseless thing in the world! It is self-contradictory, and would be laughable, if the results were not so serious. Remember this, that God has given a full measure of faith to every person (compare *Romans* 12:3 and *Ephesians* 4:7) and that there cannot by any possibility be any person on earth, who has his senses, who is so constituted that he cannot believe. The only question is,

"Does he prefer to believe a lie rather than the truth?"

How is it with you?

9. How to Gain a Knowledge of the Bible

Present Truth, August 16, 1900

AGAIN and again the writer is met with the request,

“Tell me how to study the Bible.”

Unfortunately this request too often really means,

“Tell me how to get a knowledge of the Bible without study,”

—and as the thing cannot be done, the enquirers make no advancement.

The first and most essential requisite to acquiring a knowledge of the Bible is an intense, burning desire to know what it contains, and to understand it. With this, anybody can get a knowledge of the Bible, without being told how; for the Lord has said:

Proverbs 2

³ If you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

But...

Proverbs 17

¹⁶ Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he has no heart to it?

It is absolutely impossible for anybody to become a Bible student, unless he feels that he must understand it. If one has lighted on a portion of Scripture which baffles him, and yet which he is sure contains a treasure of great value to him, and his desire to understand it will give him no rest, the problem is half solved. Let him hold that portion continually in his mind. Look at it from all sides. Get perfectly familiar with every event that is even re-

motely referred to in it and with every other portion of Scripture which is suggested by it, so that the mind's eye can take in all at a glance. Dwell upon every word, examining it minutely to see why it was written, and how it is related to every other word. Study the verses in their order until they are as indelibly impressed upon your mind as is the way to your place of business. You will know them so well that you could say them without thinking; but since you have got that familiarity with them only by thinking and not by parrot-like repetition, you will not be able to repeat them without being made to think. Think of them the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning, and as you walk or ride by the way.

If you read any other language than the English, by all means use that as well. Read the text in every language that you possibly can, and make use of every reliable translation, so that you get and combine in one view all the possible shades of meaning of each word. Do this with earnest, humble prayer to Him who gives wisdom to those who lack,²¹¹ and the result will exceed your highest expectations. Not all at once will the knowledge come; but at intervals as long as you live, light will flash forth from the text which once seemed so dull and uninteresting, and you will never wonder whether it was worth all the trouble.

²¹¹ *James* 1:5.

10. How to Remember the Word

Present Truth, October 18, 1900

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. How to Remember the Word

How can I remember all that I hear?

I TAKE it for granted that you have reference to Bible teaching and sermons, which go from your mind sometimes almost as soon as you have heard them. At any rate, after hearing hundreds of Bible readings and Gospel sermons, you find yourself unable to recall any of them in particular. You will doubtless be surprised when I tell you that I do not think this is to be regretted. A great memory is not an unmixed blessing. If you could remember the whole of any sermon you hear, so as to be able to repeat it to your friends in just the order that it was given, and in almost the same words, it would be a thing to be deplored, rather than to be proud of.

I recall a man of my acquaintance who had a wonderful memory for Scripture texts, so that he could quote all that he had heard or read, and could give the reference accurately, yet his real knowledge of the Scriptures was very limited. The saving truth of the Word was not written in his heart. He had a wonderful memory for words, but not much hold of the Word. He could talk glibly to others, quoting texts and putting them together in very good order; but what he said did not take a deep hold of his hearers. On the other hand I have known some persons with poor memory, as they would tell you, meager attainments in educational lines, and what some would call limited mental capacity, who had the Word so hidden in their hearts that it was a great blessing to them and to others.

Memory is only a part of the mind, not by any means the whole of it. To have a great memory does not necessarily indicate the possession of a great mind. In saying this I do not depreciate the value of a good memory, but only urge that it be used in the right direction, and not allowed to degenerate into a mere recorder of

words. A really good memory is something far different from the tape in a telegraph instrument or the cylinder in a phonograph.

Let me tell you that no true Bible teacher or Gospel minister desires to have his hearers store up his words so that they can give them back to him. No man wishes this, except the one who is giving his own words, fine phrases and sentences built up with great care, and these are usually not worth remembering. But if the minister is a preacher of the Word, one sent from God and therefore speaking the words of God, he desires a far different evidence that his work has been successful, than the hearing of his words repeated in a testimony meeting. What is this evidence? It is simply the changed life.

The Word of God is good seed. Now no farmer ever wishes to get the same seed back that he sows in the earth. He knows that if it does not die,

John 12

²⁴ ...it abides alone; but if it die it brings forth much fruit.

If the earth should hold the seed for months, and then return it to the farmer just as he sowed it, he would say that he had labored in vain. In like manner we give food to the hungry, not expecting and not declaring ever to see it again. If the food we give to our children be retained by them for a time, and then should appear just as they received it we should be alarmed. We should know that there could be no growth under such conditions. The food that is eaten must never again appear in the same form, but must show itself in increased strength and activity. Then we know that it has been received to profit. Thus must it be with the Word of God upon which we feed.

The hearers of the Word are not to be mere echoes. The Gospel plan is that everybody should be original, an original, independent thinker, in the proper sense of the term. No person is to build upon any other person, but upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ;

1 Corinthians 3

¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The promise is,

John 6

⁴⁵ They shall be all taught of God.

True thinking, right thinking, is the product of the Spirit of God in the soul, the expression in words of the experience of the life. This is all the real originality that is possible. True originality is the working of...

1 Corinthians 12

¹¹ ...that one and the selfsame Spirit, distributing to every man severally as He will.

Thus there is no ground for anybody to complain of lack of education, nor any reason for one to ape another, for the Gospel itself provides the highest education for all. There is no teacher like God.

Psalms 19

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

This wisdom is not on the surface, but is in the life and character.

Psalms 111

¹⁰ A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

You may have heard the story of the poor washerwoman whose pastor, not so wise as she, chided her because she could not recall even the text of the sermon he had preached the day before. She was bleaching cloth on the grass, and she pointed to it saying,

“You see this cloth? I pour water on it, and the cloth does not hold any of it, yet it keeps getting whiter; so it is with the Word

that I hear; I am not able to keep it all in my memory, but it leaves me whiter.”

The Gospel sermon that has been of more service to me than all others combined, changing the whole course of my life, and furnishing a constant supply of strength and courage, was one that I heard many years ago, and of which I cannot remember a single word. More than that, I could not have told the text or repeated a single sentence five minutes after the talk was finished. Indeed, there has never been any impression in my mind that I heard a word of it; but the influence of it will last through eternity. In it I saw Christ crucified for me, and that so completely absorbed my mind that every human utterance was obliterated. I have never regretted not being able to recall the words of that discourse.

But you may say that you would like to be able to recall and use some of the words of the Bible, and it is well that you should; for I do not wish to be understood as meaning that our knowledge of Divine truth is to be hazy and indefinite. It is possible for every person to be able to recall all the Scripture texts that he needs. God’s method of instruction is such that all may learn, and He teaches us to profit.

Proverbs 16

³ Commit your works unto the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established.

It all depends upon what is assimilated and incorporated into the life.

If you would get the most benefit from the food you eat, you must chew it a long time. It is not the great quantity that you eat, that determines the amount of strength you will have, but that which you assimilate. All the food that you can transform into flesh and blood and bone, does you good, and is available for use all the time. That which your system does not appropriate is of no use to you. And thorough mastication, chewing the food for a long time, is the surest way to provide for its assimilation. Even so it is with the Word, upon which we are to feed, that we may

grow thereby. It is not by reading or hearing a great deal, that we grow spiritually, but by meditating a great deal on a little until we extract something from it that feeds our souls.

Psalm 1

¹ Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.

³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.

You may never be able to recall at will all the Scripture texts that you have thus assimilated, and it is not necessary that you should. When the proper time comes,—when you need them in your own conflict with Satan, or to help some other struggling soul,—the Spirit of God will bring them to your remembrance, and you will be astonished to find how many you know, and how aptly they come to mind. And you will remember not only the exact words, but often the location of them as well. The experiences that affect one's life are not only remembered, but they carry with them the impress of their surroundings. You have no difficulty in remembering just where certain things occurred in your life. Deaths, marriages, the meeting with or parting from friends, and a thousand other things, not only stand out prominently before you, but you can see every detail of the places where they occurred, although you have never made any effort to do so.

So as you feed upon the Word, those portions that mark an era in your life will remain with you, and will carry with them the picture of their place in the Bible. So be of good courage, knowing that God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world:

1 Corinthians 1

²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

–and that Christ is made unto us wisdom, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:

1 Corinthians 1

³⁰ But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.



Luther studying the Bible at the University of Erfurt

11. How We Know the Bible Is Inspired

Present Truth, November 1, 1900

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. How We Know the Bible Is Inspired

How can we know that the Bible is the Word of God? Having accepted it as the Word, how may we know that we have the whole of it?

THIS is a question that has vexed very many persons, and one with which the enemies of the Bible have delighted to perplex those whose faith was not well established in it; yet it really offers us no difficulty whatever, and may be answered by a little child. Indeed, there is nothing else in the world so plain, and so easy to be known, as that the Bible is the inspired Word of the living God.

The Testimony of the Child

If you should ask a little child who, like Timothy of old, has been instructed in the Holy Scriptures, how he knows that the Bible is the true Word of God, he would not be able to give you a categorical answer. Childlike, he might say,

“Because it is,”

—and no better answer could be given. To one who, like Timothy, has from his childhood known the Holy Scriptures, it never occurs that there can be any question as to their authenticity. They are their own evidence.

To one who knows them, they are self-evidently the Word of God, and it is as impossible to demonstrate the fact to another as it is to demonstrate an axiom in mathematics. There can be no demonstration, except the sight of the eyes, that the whole of a thing is greater than any of its parts; and even so there can be no demonstration of the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, except that of experience. Faith is simply the recognition of things that are. Truth is “that which is,” and all we have to do is to get our eyes open to see it.

Faith Comes by Hearing

But someone will say, with one writer, that this evidence leaves “no Bible for the impenitent,” that is, that if experience gives the knowledge, than those who have not yielded themselves to the Lord have no means by which they may know that what they read is His Word. Do not think so for a moment. God has not left himself without witness, and although it is he that wills to do the will of God, who knows of the teaching,²¹² it is also true that God works in every man to will as well as to do.²¹³

Romans 10

¹⁷ Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The power of the Word is such that the very first sound of it that is heard carries with it the conviction of its truthfulness.

Psalms 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Personal Experience

May I take advantage of our private talk to give you a little personal experience? It is not necessary to go into the details of how I, having been in my earliest childhood a reader of the Bible, came, through “the deceitfulness of sin,”²¹⁴ to doubt everything.

Psalms 73

²² So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before the Lord.

Having been led captive by Satan, I of course had no “mind of my own” (for nobody can have a mind of his own unless he has “the mind of the Lord”²¹⁵;

John 3

²⁷ A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

²¹² John 7:17.

²¹³ Philippians 2:13.

²¹⁴ Hebrews 3:13.

²¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:16.

And therefore I like a simpleton echoed the stale doubts that have been repeated by skeptics for centuries, and fancied that they were original with me. So I went so far in my stupid unbelief as to say that the inspiration of the Bible was the same as that of Shakespeare or any other writer who has had power to hold the attention of the people.

Well, how did I become convinced of the reality of Divine things, and that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, given by His Spirit? Easily enough, and it took not more than a minute. The perfect knowledge which has left no room for a shade of doubt from that day to this was conveyed to me in far less time than it has taken you to read these lines. The method was simple: God himself spoke to me by His Spirit. He did not enter into any argument to prove to me that He was speaking, or that His Word is true; He simply told me that I was a sinner, and pointed out some of the sins to which I was specially addicted. He showed me myself and all the deformity of my character; and, although if any person had told me the same things five minutes before, I should have contradicted him, and should have entered into an argument to prove that he was altogether mistaken, and that I was no such man as he said, it never occurred to me to make the slightest objection to the Voice that then spoke to me.

The very first utterance brought into my soul the conviction that this was the word of the Spirit, whose working I had denied, and that I was a guilty, lost sinner. I knew it as well as though I had always known it. It did not seem as though I had ever doubted it, or that there could ever have been any chance for doubt. It was not fancy, it was not what people ordinarily call belief; it was positive knowledge, so complete that nothing could have made it more sure, and that no amount of argument could have shaken. In order to tell the difference between light and darkness, one has only to have eyes, and to have them open; then there is no possible ground for argument; sight carries its own evidence. Well, my eyes were that moment opened, and I saw. A li-

brary of books, and years of reading, could never have done for me what the Lord himself did for me in an instant of time.

One Voice Throughout

But the Lord did not leave me with the simple knowledge that I was a sinner. That would have been to sink me into the depths of despair. The Spirit first convicts of sin, and then of righteousness. So He revealed to me the fact that God loved me, and that Christ died for me; for me, of all people in the world. I needed no assurance that this voice was from heaven; the positive, absolute knowledge came with it. From the time that God spoke to me until this minute I have known that the Bible is the Word of God, for it agrees from first to last with what God at that time spoke to my heart. I find the same voice everywhere in it. I know the voice, and have no fear of being led astray.

I know that the Bible is the Word of God in just the same way, although a good deal more surely, that you know your father, and that a letter which he writes you is from him. Nobody ever introduced you to your father, or ever told you his name, yet you know him; and in just the same way, only as I have said, a great deal more certainly, may we know the voice of God speaking to us in the Bible. Even though we have wandered in the dark paths of sin, and have lost the simple faith of childhood, the Voice that never ceases speaking will produce the same conviction as though we had never doubted. It is possible for the oldest and most hardened sinner to become as a little child, and to have the simple faith of a child, which leaves no room for doubt or questioning.

Greater Witness Than That of Man

Volumes have been written by learned divines to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible. They may have done good, but not one of them ever converted or ever can convert a single soul. Not one ever produced or ever can produce the certainty in anybody that the Bible is the Word of God. Christ, who is the Word, and from whom the written Word comes, said:

John 5

³⁴ I receive not testimony from man.

John the Baptist bore faithful witness to Him, but He said:

³⁶ I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me.

1 John 5

⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

And this witness is given to every soul on earth, and whoever accepts it has the witness in himself.

The Councils and the Canon

People will gravely, and with an air of great learning, tell you that it was the Council of Nice that fixed the Sacred Canon as accepted at present, and that we have our Bible only on the authority of the bishops there assembled. It is all the gravest sort of nonsense, and no one needs any surer proof of the falsity of the statement than the records of the early Councils, all of which are accessible to anyone who can read, which contain no evidence whatever that there was any doubt as to what constituted the Bible, or that there was any thought of deciding the matter.

Many times since then people have been moved to make a public profession of their faith; many times they have even thought it necessary to pass resolutions declaring their belief; but that settled nothing, and originated nothing. The Scriptures, just as we have them now, were known and accepted by all believers as the Word of God long before the Council of Nice. More than this, unbelievers themselves bore witness to this fact, by attempting to overthrow them, and by bringing against them the very same objections that have been put forth by unbelievers ever since. Since the first century after Christ, when the last of the books of the Bible was written, no new objection to the Bible has ever been invented.

All the Sacred Writings Not Preserved

To the question how we may know that we have the whole of the Word of God, the answer is just as simple. If you mean to ask if we have everything that has been written by inspiration of God, the answer is, No. We have the testimony of the Bible itself that many things which have been spoken by the prophets have not come down to us. John tells us that if everything that Jesus did were written,

John 21

²⁵ I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

We have frequent reference to “the book of Jasher,”²¹⁶ and there is no doubt that Paul wrote three epistles to the Corinthians. But all this does not concern us. We have nothing to do with anything that has not been given to us. The fact that there have been books written which we have never seen does not affect those which we have. If God had thought it necessary that we should have those lost books, He would have preserved them for us. That He could have done so if He had wished to, is evident from the fact that He has preserved those which we have, although the rage of devils working through men, even through the professed church of God, has been directed against the Bible, endeavoring to stamp it out of existence. But it remains to this day, a monument to the power and Divinity of God. Moreover,

2 Peter 1

³ His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

So that, although there may have been many books written, which we have not, those which we have are fully sufficient to make us...

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;

²¹⁶ *Joshua* 10:13; *2 Samuel* 1:18.

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

God's Word is one; all the various words that the Bible contains are but revelations of the one Word. Full salvation is in every one of them. The fullness of the life of the whole is in each part. Therefore:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ Continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them.

The Evidence of Prophecy

There is another internal evidence of the truthfulness of the Bible—a test which the Bible itself gives us. It is the testimony of prophecy. We read these statements of the Lord:

Jeremiah 28

⁹ The prophet which prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord has truly sent him.

Deuteronomy 18

²¹ And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?

²² When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

The Bible is full of predictions of events to take place, and nearly all of them are of things that are now in the past, so that we may see how exactly every prediction has been fulfilled. This is exactly in line with what I have before said, that the Bible is its own witness.

Each Believer a Witness

1 John 5

¹⁰ He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

And thenceforth he himself becomes a witness to the truthfulness of the Word of God. It is upon evidence of this nature that the Lord rests His case. In the controversy as to who is God, He says:

Isaiah 43

⁸ Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf people that have ears.

⁹ Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

¹⁰ You are my witnesses, says the Lord; and my Servant whom I have chosen; that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me.

¹¹ I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.

¹² I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore you are my witnesses, says the Lord, that I am God.

This is the sum of the matter. Skeptics may attempt to unsettle the faith of believers, and may bring learned arguments, and may refer to many books which the believer has never even heard of; but it would be easier to batter down Gibraltar with a pea-shooter than for any of their talk to shake the faith of anyone who has the faith of a child. You may feel very ignorant in the face of all the learned references that infidels will flourish in your face; but such ignorance is truly bliss; and secure in the positiveness of the knowledge which the world calls foolishness you may joyfully sing:

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin;
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him;
But I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able

To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.²¹⁷



Edwin Bligh reads from the Bible to enslaved African Americans
in a forest in Mississippi

²¹⁷ D. W. Whittle, Hymn: *I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace*, 1883.

12. Read, and You'll Know

Present Truth, November 8, 1900

THIS was the statement continually repeated by an old teacher to the young people whenever they expressed a wish for knowledge on any subject. It is pre-eminently true in the realm of religion; for...

Hebrews 11 [RV]

³ By faith we understand,

—and...

Romans 10

¹⁷ ...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Only we should go a step farther back than the old man did, and say,

“Believe, and you’ll know.”

Mark 9

²³ All things are possible to him that believes.

There is no height or depth of knowledge that is not possible to the one who reads the Bible with a heart open to receive all that it has to impart, and for the purpose of glorifying God in his body and spirit.²¹⁸ To such God makes himself known, and in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.²¹⁹

And this again demonstrates the fact that the best things are the easiest to obtain. The most valuable possessions cannot be purchased, but are to be had for nothing. The Bible contains the key of all knowledge, the sum of all wisdom, and it is the easiest book in the world to understand. The reason why so few understand it is that they go at it in a hard way. They think that they must work the knowledge out of their own brain, whereas in order to understand the Bible one has only to believe. He has not to

²¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:20.

²¹⁹ Colossians 2:3.

build up a system, but simply to believe each individual statement and allow the Holy Spirit to bring the various parts together in his mind, for whatever purpose they are needed. Our study is to know what God has said; His part is to make it clear to us.

13. The Hope Within

Present Truth, November 15, 1900

THE apostolic exhortation is,

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.

It is a great mistake to suppose that means to be able to repeat a creed, or to quote Scripture texts to substantiate dogmas. A formula of doctrine is not a hope. Hope is living; it is a real thing.

Colossians 1

²⁷ Christ in you [is the only] hope of glory.

Therefore to be able to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in us, is to be able to make plain to him the Divine presence. This is further evident from the fact that the ability to give a reason for the hope in us comes from having God sanctified, enthroned, in the heart.²²⁰ Christianity is love, not in word, but in deed and in truth.²²¹

²²⁰ See *1 Peter* 3:15.

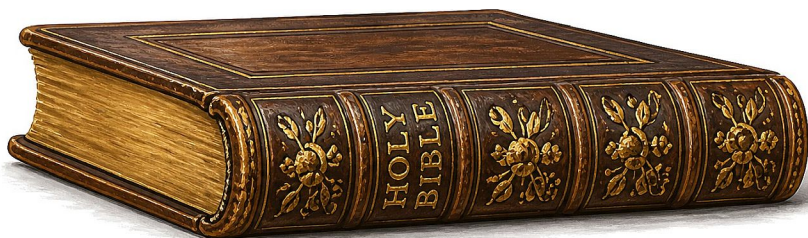
²²¹ *1 John* 3:18.

14. Old and New Testament

Present Truth, November 22, 1900

Original title: Back Page

THE Old Testament is often spoken of by thoughtless people as a yoke of bondage. But if the Old Testament be a yoke of bondage, the New must be also. Its requirements are at least as difficult. Christ did not introduce a lower standard of conduct in His Sermon on the Mount. The one who takes the New Testament as his standard has got as hard a master as the Jew who found a yoke of bondage in the Old Testament. The man who accepts them both and *lives by* every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,²²² instead of trying to *live up to* some of them, finds in both Old and New Testament the power of God unto salvation.²²³



²²² Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4.

²²³ Romans 1:16.

15. Defending a Defense

Present Truth, December 6, 1900

WE ARE in receipt of a handbill advertising a series of lectures...

...to establish the truths of Christianity, and to defend the Bible against all phases of unbelief, infidelity, and skepticism.

It is wholly a work of supererogation,²²⁴ for...

2 Timothy 2

¹⁹ ...the foundation of God stands sure,

—having been established ages ago by the Lord himself.

Psalms 119

⁸⁹ For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

The truths of Christianity are established in Christ himself, who is the Rock of ages. Whoever advertises that he will establish them, thereby shows that he does not know them, and that he himself needs instruction in the first principles of the Gospel. To establish is to found, to build up, and so a Gospel that could be established by any man would be at the best only a human Gospel, with no more power than the man had who established it.

What the world needs to be told about is the Gospel that is so firmly established that it needs no defense, but can sustain and protect all who build upon it. This is why we have not the slightest interest in so-called “Christian evidence” lectures. One simple Gospel sermon is worth a million of them.

²²⁴ PP Editor’s note: “Supererogation” means: “doing more than your duty or job requires. It is the act of performing a good, helpful, or noble action that is not strictly mandatory. If you do not do it, you are not doing anything wrong.” In Catholic theology, “the doctrine of supererogation refers to acts performed ‘beyond what God requires’—actions that are morally good and praiseworthy, but not strictly commanded as a binding duty. Going ‘beyond the call of duty,’ these voluntary works form the basis for counsels of perfection and the theological ‘treasury of merit.’”

To every person who has the idea that he must defend God's Word, we recommend the reading of this text:

Psalm 91

¹ He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.

³ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

⁴ He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

Think now of the absurdity of having a so-called “defense” which you are obliged to defend. To be sure it is a common thing to speak of “defending a fort;” but that shows that the fort is in reality not a defense. The absurdity of the idea of defending God's truth is more apparent if we use a life-preserver as an illustration. On a ship there are hundreds of them, designed to keep passengers afloat in case of accident. They are light, and buoyant, so that it is impossible for any of them to sink. With one of them fastened securely about him, a person who knows nothing of swimming may rest securely in the water. But fancy a life-preserver which needed to be protected against the waves! one which required the services of a strong swimmer to keep it afloat! Instead of a help, it would be a hindrance. It would be a nuisance to the swimmer and a death-trap to the one who cannot help himself.

To talk about defending the Bible is the same as to talk about defending God. How little people, even many professed Christians, know of God's everlasting power and Divinity; and how much they stand in need of getting acquainted with Him who is...

Psalm 46

¹ ...our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

To such ones, God is really the same as the carved gods of the heathen, which...

Jeremiah 10

⁵ ...must needs be borne, because they cannot go.

Not so is our God, who is in the heavens, and...

Psalms 115

³ ...has done whatsoever He has pleased.

His throne of grace does not need to be propped up; His loving-kindness is so excellent that the sons of men safely take refuge under its shadow; and...

Psalms 125

¹ They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides for ever.

² As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.

Isaiah 48

¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel: I am the Lord your God which teaches you to profit, which leads you by the way that you should go.

¹⁸ O that you had hearkened to my commandments!

Are you willing to allow Him to lead you in the way you ought to go? He is able to do it.

1901



Henry Martyn, translating the Bible into Persian

1. The Foolishness of the Wise

Present Truth, January 31, 1901

THE Lord declares himself to be the One who...

Isaiah 44

²⁵ ...turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness.

This He does merely by confirming the word of His servant, and this word of truth shows that the thoughts of the wise are vain. No more striking instance of the vanity and foolishness of the thoughts of the wise has ever appeared than Canon Driver's *Introduction and Notes to the Book of Daniel*, in the series of the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. His view is that the book of *Daniel* was written by an anonymous author in 166 BC, for the purpose of encouraging the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes, and that the miracles recorded in it are "imaginative anecdotes." How the people were to be encouraged by false stories, he does not explain, any more than he explains how the age of Antiochus could be "the limiting horizon of the writer," and yet four world-powers, which he asserts to be the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek Empires, be set forth. The seventy weeks are declared to be a chronological error, and that all the predictions of the book proved untrue almost as soon as they were made.

One cannot help wondering why a man of sense should waste time on an *Introduction and Notes* to a book which he considers only a tissue of lies and imaginative anecdotes. We can understand it only from that which is written:

1 Corinthians 1

¹⁹ I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,

—and to save them who are simple enough to believe the book of *Daniel*, together with the rest of the Bible.

A sad reflection is that while the publication of this infidel commentary by a prominent Church dignitary does not make a ripple, nor in the least affect his standing in the Church, there would be a storm of protest if he should presume to preach in a Nonconformist chapel, or to conduct a service without the regulation robes.



2. The Authorized Version

Present Truth, February 7, 1901

IT IS common to speak of the *Authorized Version* of the Bible, and the *Revised Version*, and this distinction leads many to suppose that in some way or for some reason the old version of the Bible, the one in common use, has more authority than the *Revision*. As a matter of fact, however, the *Revision* is “authorized” just as much as the other.

A correspondent of the *Church Times* states the case thus:

The *Revised Version* has exactly the same authority as the Common Version—viz., the authority of Queen Victoria acting on the request of Convocation, as of King James 400 years ago. The word “authorized” in our Common Version was a late addition of the Queen’s Printers, and has no “authority” whatever.

The only real “authority” that any translation can have is its faithfulness to the original, without regard to who did it, or who authorized it to be done; and in this sense the *Revision* must certainly as a whole, be considered “authorized,” rather than the *Common Version*. At any rate, nobody can be justified in ignoring it, and nobody can be said really to study the English Bible, who does not make constant use of it in connection with the other. When it can be obtained for a few pence, no one has any excuse for not owning a copy.

3. The Need of the Churches

Present Truth, February 14, 1901

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Chronicle* gives utterance to some truth that needs emphasizing, when he says that...

It was not, with such miserable weapons as "Modern Thought," and so-called "Higher Criticism," and such-like impostures and frauds, that men like Wesley and Whitefield brought about the great Evangelical revival at the end of the eighteenth century.

He adds that:

Too many Nonconformist churches are eaten up with that hazy kind of preaching which would make anybody ask the question as to how much of the Bible is the inspired revelation of God to man, and where does it begin to be inspired.

He who would move souls must have a definite belief, and must know not only what he believes, and why he believes it, but *whom* he believes.

4. The True Scientific Text Book

Present Truth, February 21, 1901

Psalm 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.

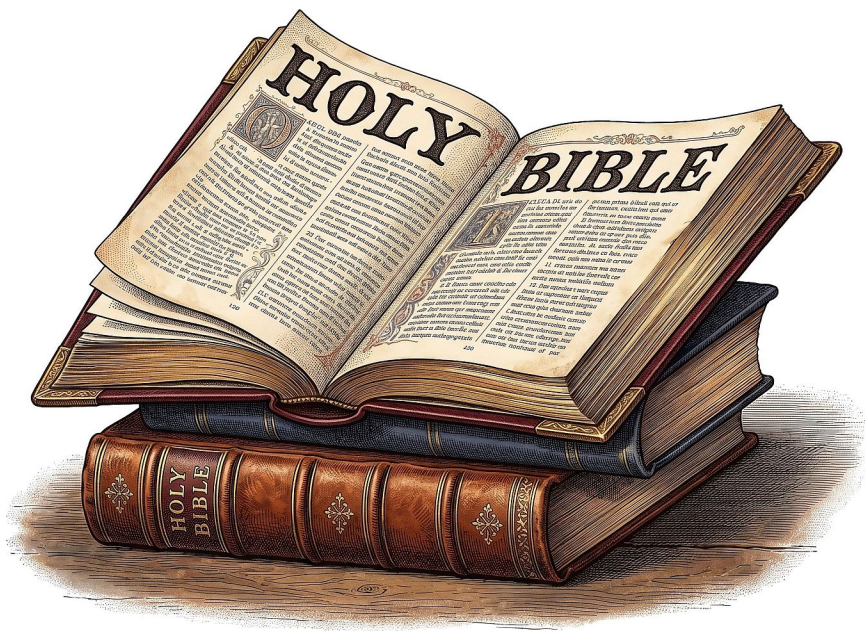
SINCE the opening of God's Word gives light, and gives understanding to the simple, it follows as a necessary conclusion that when that word is left unopened, and its teachings are ignored, darkness and foolishness must characterize a man's thoughts and words. This was strikingly illustrated in the Hunterian Oration delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons last week, in which the speaker endeavored to prove the descent of man from the ape. The difference in intellect between the ape and the human being was thus lucidly accounted for:

The reason why the brain of apes is so defective appears to be attributable to the small capacity of the forepart of the creature's skull, caused by its consolidation during the first year of life in a rigid closed case within which the animal's brain cannot expand, while man's brain develops till his twentieth year.

This, in the language of common people, is equivalent to saying that the reason why an ape's brain is smaller than a man's, is that his head is not as large, which is quite correct, but which explains nothing. It has been said so often by professed scientists, that the Bible is not a Scientific book, that most people suppose it must be so; but the truth is that the Bible is the only really scientific book in the world. It is the source, the text book, if you please, of all true science; and whoever ignores or despises its statements is left to the necessity of uttering a jumble of high sounding phrases without sense, and deluding himself and some of his hearers with the idea that it is great knowledge.

We do not advocate the idea that a person should read no other book but the Bible, although the man who should know that thoroughly, and no other book would know more than the one who

should know every other book, and be ignorant of Bible truth. But we do wish to emphasize the statement that whoever knows the Bible first of all, and always gives it the first place, will have no difficulty in finding out very quickly all the truth there is in any other book. The Bible is not a book to be ashamed of, or apologized for.



5. Inspiration of the Bible

Present Truth, April 4, 1901

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Inspiration of the Bible

What authority is there that the Bible is inspired more than any other book?

I DO not think I can indicate the correct answer to this question any more directly than by asking another, namely,

“What authority is there that the sun gives us any more light than the moon?”

You say that you see and feel the greater light and heat of the sun. True, and just so we feel the power of the Word of God, such as cannot possibly be felt from any other words, because there are no other words like those of God.

Jesus said,

John 5

³⁴ I receive not testimony from man.

Do you think that if Jesus were on earth you would want a testimonial from some man, to the effect that He is indeed the Christ? Do you not see that if you should depend on another's assurance that He is what He professes to be, that would show that you held that other one as greater, and more to be depended on, than Jesus himself? In like manner, to look elsewhere than in the Bible itself for proof of its inspiration, is virtually to deny its inspiration, and to make it secondary to some other book.

The prophecies contained in the Bible, foretelling events hundreds of years in advance, which have been fulfilled to the letter, are one of the strongest evidences that it is the Word of Him who knows all things from the beginning. Only God can speak of...

Romans 4

¹⁷ ...those things that be not, as though they were.

But the Bible as a whole is prophecy; for none of it came...

2 Peter 1

²¹ ...by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I hear you say,

“That is begging the question; I know that the Bible itself claims to be inspired; what I want is to have its claim verified.”

Well, you will never find any authority for the inspiration of the Bible, outside of the Bible itself. The Catholic Church claims to be above the Bible, but in so doing it discredits the Bible as being the Word of God, or else it sets itself above God. It really does both; but the fact is, that the true church of Christ is subject to the Bible, and is guided by it. The church is built upon the Word, and is the true church of Christ only as long as it conforms to that Word.

Suppose Sandow²²⁵ should seize you in his hands and exert all the power of his muscles on you; would you ask him,

“What authority is there for the statement that you are the strongest man living?”

Certainly not; his grip upon you would be all the evidence you would require. So when the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the Word, gets hold of you, evidence is at hand.

John 3

³³ He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.

The Word of God is...

Ephesians 6

¹⁷ ...the sword of the Spirit,

²²⁵ PP Editor's note: Eugen Sandow (1867-1925) was a German bodybuilder and showman from Prussia.

Hebrews 4

¹² ...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.

Can you not tell the difference between a sharp knife and a blunt one? When the woman of Samaria left Jesus at the well, and went to call her neighbors, she said,

John 4

²⁹ Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?

So when the Spirit lays bare your own heart to you, you will not ask for anybody to be sponsor for Him.

I do not believe that infidels who have written with the avowed intention of overthrowing the Bible have really done so much injury to souls as have some of its zealous but unwise defenders. The attempts to “prove that the Bible is inspired” have sown more real doubt than anybody can think. They have made people believe that the Bible needed defending, when it does not. It is its own evidence. No infidel was ever yet converted by homilies about the Bible, nor will one ever be converted by any such thing. There is only one way to cure infidelity, and that is to...

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the Word.

If one says that he does not believe it, there is nothing to do but to give him some more. If he absolutely refuses to hear it, he shuts himself off from the only source of proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

What is the authority that the Bible is inspired? It is God himself, who speaks in it as clearly as when He thundered from the top of Sinai. Can you tell when it thunders? The same voice speaks in the Bible. Hear, and you will know.

John 7 [RV]

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

6. Broad-Minded Christians

Present Truth, April 4, 1901

HERE lies before us a book, in which one has written a criticism on Philip and the Ethiopian, as concerns the baptism of the latter. We will not spend time over the criticism; it is of no importance; but the criticism which the writer makes on Philip is worth noting, for it expresses a very common idea concerning some of the men whom God has most highly honored. The words are these:

“I think that the reason [for the supposed error] is that Philip had been a Jew, and on that account was rather narrow in his thoughts.”

Just as though to be a Jew necessarily meant to be narrow-minded! Solomon was a Jew, and of him we read that...

1 Kings 4

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

No one can accuse him of narrow-mindedness.

Paul had been a Jew, and he remained a Jew all his life. He, a supposedly narrow-minded Jew, wrote to heathen, who by parity of reasoning, must have been broad-minded, praying that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened,²²⁶ and again,

Ephesians 3

¹⁷ ...that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,

¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Surely it would be impossible to be broader in thoughts than that.

²²⁶ *Ephesians* 1:18.

It is a shame for a Christian to cast reproach on the Jews, for in so doing he is reviling his Lord and Master, who was a Jew. To say that Philip was narrow in his thoughts, because he had been a Jew, is to imply that all Jews were necessarily narrow, and that would include Christ himself; yet nothing is more common than for something in the Bible with which one does not agree, to be set down to Jewish narrowness and prejudice.

Do those who utter such things realize that they are thus discrediting God's Word, the Bible, almost the whole of which was written by Jews? Do they mean that we need a broader revelation? There are some who do not hesitate to say "Yes," even to this.

People have the idea that unbelief is a mark of breadth of mind, and of deep thought; that the skeptic has so comprehensive a grasp of things that he sees the difficulties which the narrow-minded, credulous believer cannot appreciate. The reverse is exactly the case. Unbelief is a sign of shallowness and narrowness, while faith always broadens the mind.

There is another, thing which should be recognized and remembered, and that is that whatever a man is by nature, when he is in Christ,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ ...old things are passed away; [and] all things are become new.

The new birth, removes the disabilities of the old birth, and the blaspheming persecutor becomes the praying preacher of the Gospel. Is it not enough for avowed infidels to cast discredit on the Bible, without professed Christians joining in?

7. How to Study the Bible

Present Truth, April 11, 1901

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. How to Study the Bible

PP Editor's note: This article was originally published in *Present Truth*, March 23, 1893, under the title, "Studying the Bible." This later reprint is slightly revised, so I have included both.

I have read the article in this week's *Present Truth* on the Inspiration of the Bible,²²⁷ and believe that the authority is to be found only in the word itself. But my difficulty is that I do not know how to study the Bible, and I shall be very glad if you can give me some helpful suggestions.

FEW people know how really to study the Bible. And this is not always because they do not know how to study at all, for very often those who are good students otherwise, are poor students of the Bible, even though they want to understand it. In *Proverbs* 2:1-5 we are told to study the Bible so as to understand it. Let us read the passage:

Proverbs 2

¹ My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

² So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

³ Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

⁴ If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

⁵ Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Digging for Hid Treasure

When a man is convinced that there is rich silver or gold ore in a certain place, what does he do? He goes right there and digs *in that very place*. But how do people generally do with the Bible? Why, as soon as they light upon a portion where there is special treasure,—and that means a place where there is special difficulty,

²²⁷ See the previous article, "Inspiration of the Bible."

—they immediately go off to some other place to dig. If they went to some other part of the Bible, it would not be so bad, for there is treasure everywhere in the Bible, and whoever finds it in one place will be better able to find it in another; but they generally go to a library and begin to dig among the commentators, or they ask their pastor or some friend what he thinks it means. It is as though a man should find indications of gold in a certain place, and should straightway go off a hundred miles and begin digging. People are not so foolish as that in temporal matters.

Another point: When a man is digging for silver or gold, he carefully examines every portion of the soil where he is digging. Whoever has seen men washing out gold knows that every particle of the soil is carefully examined. No matter what the style of mining, everything is in some way closely scrutinized.

Consider What the Word Says

Here then we have the simple directions for studying the Bible. First go to the Bible itself, and to the particular passage which you wish to understand, and you give the most careful and patient attention to every sentence and every word. Let your mind dwell upon every word and every clause, noting its relation to what precedes and what follows, until you know for a certainty just *what it says*. Do not sit down to commit the passage to memory so that you can repeat it parrot-like. That is not study. But question the text, asking a question and letting the words of the text give the answer, until you cannot possibly think of it without thinking its very words.

When the student knows what the text says, then what? Here is the instruction:

2 Timothy 2 [RV]

⁷ Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

How will He give us the understanding? By our considering what He says. That is, while we are diligently considering the

text, the understanding of the text will come from the text itself. From what other place should we expect it to come?

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The meaning of what the Lord says is in just the very words that He says.

Do Not Be Impatient

How long must one consider the words before he can understand it? That depends upon several things. We must be prepared to consider them for ten years, if need be, without getting impatient. We must have such confidence that wisdom and knowledge do come from the very words of the Lord that we shall be assured that they are really there, and that they are nowhere else. But much depends on the spirit in which we approach the study. The Spirit of God is the source whence the Bible comes; the Spirit is the life and power and wisdom of the Word. When we come with hearts submissive to the Spirit, we shall not have to wait so long as we otherwise would.

Remember that the righteousness of God is revealed to faith, and not to intellect. That does not put any discount upon intellect, but it simply exalts faith. God has given man talents of intellect, and expects him to use them, but not without faith. A very feeble intellect with faith will understand the Bible far more readily, and more perfectly, than a giant intellect without faith.

At the same time that one particular passage is being thus studied, do not neglect the reading and studying of other parts of the Bible. The Bible is a unit; one Spirit and one truth is in it all; and every part is thus directly connected with every other part. If the particular passage under special consideration is in the middle of a chapter, the student will find it necessary to extend his careful study back to the beginning of the chapter, and even to the beginning of the book; for no book in the Bible, unless it be *Proverbs* or

Psalms, is made up of detached thoughts. A line of thought runs through each, and every text should be considered in its full connection. Then when it is used in the study of any special subject, it will not be misapplied.

When the mind thus gets accustomed to dwelling upon the Scriptures, it is wonderful how light will come. Almost anything may serve to cause the light to shine forth from the Word. While reading some other portion of the Bible, while listening to a discourse, in conversation even upon some other subject,—in short, in a thousand different ways,—the mind may be directed to the text that has been studied, and the light will shine forth. No one can tell in what way the Spirit will work, and what means it will use to lead the soul into the truth; only let it be remembered that in any case it is the Spirit that guides, and that the knowledge gained comes from the Word itself, and not from any other source.

Proverbs 2

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

8. The Danger of Narrowness

Present Truth, April 18, 1901

Original title: Back Page

THE greater always includes the less. The fact that one text does not make so strong a statement about a certain thing as another text does, detracts nothing from that other text. For instance, in *Isaiah* 40:6, we read that “all flesh is grass,” while in *1 Peter* 1:24, we are told that “all flesh is *as* grass.” Both are true. The positive statement is not a contradiction of the comparative; but we must beware of taking the latter as a contradiction of the former, saying that all flesh is not really grass, but only *as* grass. The Bible says positively that “all flesh *is* grass,” and no lesser statement can possibly lessen the force of this truth. There is never any danger of taking too broad or extensive a view of God’s Word; the trouble always comes from taking too narrow a view, for that results in narrowing ourselves.

9. How to Understand the Scriptures

Present Truth, May 9, 1901

Luke 24:44-45

NOT in what sense we should take them, not in what light we should regard them, but how we may arrive at a perfect understanding of them. The matter is set forth in few words in *Luke* 24:45. Jesus had appeared to His disciples, who could scarcely believe that He who had brought others from the grave could himself rise from the dead.

Luke 24

⁴⁴ And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

⁴⁵ Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

John 3

²⁷ A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.

Knowledge of Truth Is for All

But since...

1 Timothy 2

⁴ [God] wills that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,

—it is possible for every one to receive a perfect knowledge of God's Word, which is the truth. And the acquirement of this knowledge does not at all depend on one's education or strength of intellect, for the things concerning Christ are...

Matthew 11

²⁵ ...hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes.

Proverbs 2

⁶ The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

To whom does the Lord give wisdom?

James 1

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him.

It is given to every one who lacks it, and who asks for it. There is no partiality with God,²²⁸ and He gives nobody a monopoly of wisdom or of any branch of knowledge.

But someone will say,

“I *have* asked for wisdom, and yet I have not obtained it.”

Now be careful not to charge God with falsehood. The Lord says:

Matthew 7

⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

⁸ For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

If you have not received wisdom, then as surely as God is the God of truth you have not yet asked for it. Remember that there is such a thing as asking amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts:

James 4

³ You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.

And in that case we are told that we shall not receive. This is no contradiction of the statement that every one that asks receives; for he who asks amiss, really does not ask at all. Whoever asks for a thing different from what God has promised, or for the purpose of using it in a way that God has not designed, has not asked for that which God has promised.

²²⁸ Romans 2:11.

Wisdom Is Righteousness

Many unconsciously ask amiss, not knowing what wisdom really is. We have seen that the Lord gives wisdom, and that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven; then in order to ask to some purpose we need only to know that...

James 3

¹⁷ The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

To ask for wisdom, then, is to ask for peace, purity, gentleness, goodness.

Job 28

²⁸ The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Christ opened the minds of the disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures. Thus it reads in the more correct rendering of the *Revision*. The difficulty did not lie in the Scriptures, but in the minds of the disciples, and so it is today. It is for this reason that we have this exhortation:

Romans 12

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

It all consists in getting a new mind, the mind of Christ, and this mind becomes operative in us as soon as we yield our bodies a living sacrifice to God. When we are willing that the mind that was in Christ shall be in us, and that this mind shall control the flesh, crucifying it, and keeping all its passions dead, then floods of light will pour in upon us from the Holy Scriptures.

The trouble is that we deceive ourselves so willingly. We like to persuade ourselves that we have yielded all except one or two pet sins; but the ship is not loose from her moorings until the last cable has been let go.

1 Corinthians 1

²⁴ Christ [is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God,

—and...

³⁰ [He] of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

But He is meek and lowly in heart; He is righteousness; therefore no one need hope to understand the Scriptures, until he is perfectly willing that everything that the Bible reproves shall be given up and taken away, and that all the righteousness which the Bible commands shall be received into the life. When one comes to that frame of mind, then his darkness shall be as the noonday, and he, like Christ, will be of...

Isaiah 11

³ ...quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.

To use an expression which is so familiar that all can get the idea, he will grasp the truth of the Bible by instinct. As the margin indicates, he will scent the fear of the Lord, which is wisdom.

Applying the Eyesalve

The proper prayer is,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The way to get the eyes opened is to apply the eyesalve that the Lord supplies, which is the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 3

¹⁸ I counsel you to...anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

Isaiah 11

¹ And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

² And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Acts 10

³⁸ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

1 John 2

²⁰ You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

The Spirit of the Lord God, which was upon Christ to make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, proclaims...

Luke 4

¹⁸ ...recovering of the sight to the blind.

Matthew 10

²⁴ There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known.

In the last days the knowledge of God is to be proclaimed so fully that all must hear, and all who wish for heavenly wisdom will understand. God said to Daniel that in the time of the end the words that were sealed should be opened:

Daniel 12

⁴ ...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Nevertheless,

¹⁰ ...the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

All therefore that is necessary to make the most ignorant person proficient in knowledge, not in “theology,” but in wisdom that is recognized and respected among the world’s people, is to yield

one's soul and body to the Lord, to do His commandments. Give your mind over to Christ, for Him to renew it, and open it, and understanding will be natural to it.

And the children may know, for Paul said to Timothy,

2 Timothy 3

¹⁵ From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation.

He had not only studied the Scriptures from childhood, but he had known them when he was but a child. What a child can understand may surely be easily grasped by anybody who has a childlike mind.

Psalms 119 [RV]

¹³⁰ The opening of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Then,

Isaiah 34

¹⁶ Seek out of the Book of the Lord, and read,

—and through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, grace and peace shall be multiplied unto you.

2 Peter 1

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

10. The Scripture Records: Literal and Real

Present Truth, August 15, 1901

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Scripture Records Literal and Real

With reference to the International Sunday-school lesson for July 14,²²⁹ do you wish us to understand by your exposition that it was a real serpent which appeared to Eve and conversed with her in the garden of Eden? I can hardly believe it to have been so.

If you think it was so, will you oblige me by stating what your reasons are for so thinking? I shall be very grateful if you can give me something to convince me, as I have some very grave doubts on the subject, and it has made me feel very miserable.

NO WONDER, for that is the natural effect of doubt. Nobody can ever feel any other way than miserable, if he cherishes doubt, for doubt is the most unsatisfactory condition in the world. It is also the most foolish and unreasonable thing. A thing is either true, or it is not; if it is true, it is to be believed; if it is not true, it is not to be believed, and that is the end of the matter. But to doubt—neither to believe nor really to disbelieve—is to be nowhere.

Yes; I most certainly wish all who read to understand that it was a veritable serpent that talked with Eve, just as truly as it was a real ass that spoke to Balaam, and reproved him.

2 Peter 2

¹⁶ The dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet,

—and the serpent speaking also with man's voice, or, rather, with Satan's voice, beguiled Eve.

²²⁹ PP Editor's note: This article is titled, "Beginning of Sin and Redemption," and was published in the *Present Truth*, July 4, 1901, and is included in the collection, *Gospel Lessons in the Old Testament*.

Why do I believe that it was a real serpent? Because I believe the Bible, of the truthfulness of which I have ample evidence. How can we help believing it? I believe that it was real, because I believe that there was a real garden at Eden, and a real man and woman in it; that there was a real tree in the midst of the garden, from which they were forbidden to eat; and that the sin committed in the garden was the beginning of all the sin and sorrow that has cursed this earth. I believe that the serpent was real, for the same reason that I believe the curse to be real.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 2

³ I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Was the Apostle, writing by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, frightened at a shadow? for if it were no real serpent that beguiled Eve, then the whole story would be a myth.

Why should one doubt that the serpent was real, and still believe that the tree and the garden were real, and that the woman really ate and gave to her husband, and that they lost their purity and dominion? It is true that there are people who doubt all these things, and there are also people who doubt the entire Bible; but how anybody who professes to believe the Bible as a whole can single out as unreal a particular item, and that a leading one, in a narrative which he otherwise accepts, I cannot understand. The mystery of godliness is great; but the mystery of doubt—the mystery of iniquity—is more incomprehensible.

Why do I believe in the absolute truthfulness of the story of the deception by the serpent? Because, I believe the Gospel. You ask what that has to do with the Gospel. I will tell you in a few words. The Gospel is the good news of salvation from sin, and the sin from which we are to be saved is the sin that came into the world when the serpent beguiled Eve. Now the same book that tells of the fall, also makes known the way of redemption; but if I

cannot implicitly believe one, I have no assurance of the other. Do you not see that it is not a light matter whether we believe or not? All truth is one; all parts are woven together, each part with every other; break one thread, and the whole fabric is ruined.

But we will not talk of ruin, so far as the truth is concerned; for it endures for ever. We cannot affect it in the least by any doubt or unbelief; but our doubts have an influence on ourselves, in the same proportion that faith does. The ruin is to us, if we allow ourselves to doubt a single word of God; for if we doubt one thing, the whole will have no power in us.

I might well ask you,

“Why do you doubt the story of the serpent?”

But I will not, for I know it is not good to talk doubt, or to talk over doubts, much less to seek to manufacture a foundation for them. The best thing to do with doubt is to bury it under the everlasting mountains of truth.

Psalm 116 [2 Corinthians 4:13]

¹⁰ I believed, therefore have I spoken,

—is a motto that we all do well to follow. Thank God, there is enough to believe to keep us employed throughout eternity.

11. Some Wisdom of This World

Present Truth, August 29 1901

WE READ that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,”²³⁰ and it is quite easy to appreciate this statement when we see some phases of it. In a *Daily Chronicle* review of a new text book on Zoology, written by two college professors with several letters after their names, we find the following:

The long neck of the giraffe has been acquired, think the authors, to enable it to browse on the foliage of trees. Or to be more accurate, they rather imply than actually state this conclusion in so many words. It seems to us to be more likely that this six-foot neck is related to the need of spying out a crawling hungry lion advancing through the herbage. Here again we are far from wishing to contradict the authors. What we want to insist upon is the absence of finality in such statements of opinion; the uninstructed reader will get an impression that such opinions as those quoted are definitely ascertained facts.

It is refreshing to know that “the absence of finality of such statements of opinion” is recognized. Some, at least, of “the uninstructed” will wonder how it happened that no other animal save the giraffe ever developed a long neck by browsing on the foliage of trees; for it is certain that many other animals do have an appetite for such food. And again, we cannot help questioning how it came to pass that other animals who have just as much need of spying out hungry lions, never developed such an observatory. Yet even in the face of these absurdities of evolution, the man who believes the simple, straightforward Bible account, that God created everything “after its kind,” is pitied as credulous! Anyhow, it is better to give credence to sense than to nonsense.

²³⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:19.

12. No Lie Is of the Truth

Present Truth, October 31, 1901

“He is a very good man, so spiritual and elevating in his influence. You must mind, however, and be on your guard against believing his stories, for his judgment is so poor that he often tells egregious lies, supposing them to be true. He cannot tell the difference between truth and error, and is very credulous; but there is no doubt that he is a sure guide in morals and religion.”

DO YOU believe anybody could be found so foolish as to talk that way about any man? Would you accept, as tutor to your children, a man, even if he did not tell willful lies, gave utterance to the most ridiculous nonsense about matters which he considered it his special province to explain, in which he professed to know more about than anybody else?

Of course you would not; yet that is just what, following the leading of the so-called “Higher Criticism,” a great many ministers of the Gospel are telling us now about the Bible. They will pick flaws in almost every Bible narrative, and declare that many of them are utterly impossible and absurd, and that no man of education could think of believing them, and then will hasten to assure us that...

“The fact that it is mistaken in all these things does not impair its value as a religious guide.”

They try to make themselves believe that they are relieving the Bible of some of its “difficulties”; but they are, so far as their influence goes, weakening its hold on the people. Their teaching is more pernicious than that of any of avowed infidel. We know that the Bible speaks the truth, because it tells us the truth about ourselves, and therefore we know it to be true when it tells what happened before we were born.

13. Health and Strength for All

Present Truth, November 21, 1901

THOSE who have read the leading article in last week's *Present Truth*²³¹ will know that when the Spirit of God sends a message "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad,"²³² He sends it to all who acknowledge and serve the Lord Jesus Christ,—who have...

James 2

¹ ...the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

To all such, therefore, the salvation of the Spirit becomes a personal matter, and will certainly, if it is appreciated, become to them a part of...

Acts 9

³¹ ...the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Who would not esteem it an honor to receive a greeting from the king? But how much more regard should we not pay to the greeting of the King of kings, which we find so many times in the Scriptures, but especially, for our present study, in *James* 1:1. It is well worth a few moments' careful study, and a whole lifetime of attention.

The word "greeting," in this verse is from a common Greek word meaning *to rejoice, to be glad*. It will be noticed that in harmony with this the *Revised Version* has "wishes joy" in the margin. The Lord, through His apostle, wishes joy to His people. This is certainly good news.

Further, the Greek word is one that was used on the meeting of friends, so "hail," or "welcome," corresponding to the Latin *Salve*. One form in the conjugation of this verb is *salutem*, which all will recognize as the basis of the word "salutation." Everybody is fa-

²³¹ PP Editor's note: This article is titled, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel," and is included in the book, *The Call of Abraham*.

²³² *James* 1:1.

miliar with this word, for the sending of salutations and greetings is a common thing; but it is very seldom that we understand fully what is really contained in the words we use.

We are all familiar with the word “salutary;” a salutary lesson is one that tends to our welfare and safety. If we remember that the letters “u” and “v” were originally the same, and are really one letter, we shall see that our word “salvation” is also in this salutation. But salvation is applicable to everything that is in danger of perishing,—to the body as well as to the soul. So our Divine greeting is the wish that we may prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers.

Indeed this word rendered “greeting” has, in its common use, primary reference to one’s health. God’s greeting always means health and safety, and joy because of healing salvation.

But we must not forget that God’s words are not empty sounds. Every word of His is a thing—the thing which it names. His greeting, therefore, is not merely a wish that we may be well, but it is a healing potion. When the prophet Daniel “retained no strength,”²³³ and had no breath left in him, and the heavenly messenger hearing God’s word said,

Daniel 10

¹⁹ Be strong, yea, be strong,

—immediately he was strengthened. He says,

¹⁹ ...when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said,
Let my lord speak; for you have strengthened me.

So when God says to us, “Greeting,” that is,

“Be in health, be full of joy in the strength of salvation,”

—He conveys to us all that His words express. He is the health of our countenance.²³⁴

²³³ *Daniel* 10:16.

²³⁴ *Psalms* 43:5.

Of course we are to receive His word, and hide it within us, or else we shall not share its fullness. If we are filled with it, then it inevitably follows that all its fullness of salvation and health and joy will be ours. But just as we are to “seek righteousness,” although God speaks it to us,—that is, we are to look diligently for every way in which God’s righteousness is revealed, so that we may yield to it understandingly,—so we are to regard the life that is manifested, that we may become acquainted with all its manifestations, and know what to yield our bodies to, in order that they may enjoy His saving health.

Matthew 7

⁸ He that seeks finds:

—so there is no doubt about our receiving the blessing of health for body and soul if we earnestly desire it. O, what joy, that God meets us everywhere we turn, and always has a loving greeting for us; He does not upbraid, but greets us with tender words and looks of love and health.

Psalm 21

¹ The king shall joy in your strength, O Lord; and in your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

³ For You come to meet him with the blessings of goodness; You set a crown of pure gold on his head.

⁴ He asked life of You and You gave it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

⁵ His glory is great in your salvation; honor and majesty have You laid upon him.

⁶ For You have made him most blessed for ever; You have made him exceeding glad with your countenance.

1902



A Protestant Man and Woman caught while reading
the Forbidden Book

1. A Solid Christian Experience

Present Truth, February 13, 1902

Original title: Back Page

EARNEST appeals and stirring “revival efforts” are not to be despised nor neglected. They have their place, but they can never take the place of earnest, diligent study of the Word of God.

A solid Christian experience can never be built upon emotion, excitement, or the best resolutions. It is the “exceeding great and precious promises”²³⁵ of God, fixed in the mind, and appropriated by faith, that make us partakers of the Divine nature.

Psalms 119

¹¹ Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalms 17

⁴ Concerning the works of men, by the Word of your lips I have kept myself from the paths of the destroyer.



²³⁵ 2 Peter 1:4.

2. Contending for Their Faith

Present Truth, February 27, 1902

THE “faith that was once delivered to the saints”²³⁶ is the faith of Jesus; and the way that we are to contend earnestly for it is to submit ourselves to God. But the “faith” of many people consists in forms of words, so their contentions are with one another concerning forms and ceremonies. This is aptly illustrated by the following story told by the *Chicago Chronicle*. A certain bishop had a four-year-old daughter of considerable force of character, who was a most staunch and aggressive Churchwoman:

The other day the family entertained some friends from Denver. In the visiting family there was a little girl of the same age as the bishop’s child. Her parents were Presbyterians. It was proposed that the two little girls share the same bed, and bedtime coming, they knelt down to say their prayers together.

When the little Episcopalian was saying, “Forgive us our trespasses,” she heard her companion pray, “Forgive us our debts,” and she said, sharply:

“It’s trespasses!”

“No, it isn’t,” said the Calvinist. “It’s debts.”

“Trespasses!”

“Debts!”

“Trespasses!”

“Debts!”

Out flew a chubby Episcopalian fist and struck a Presbyterian eye. There was a mix-up immediately.

“Now its ‘trespasses,’ isn’t it?”

“No,” said the other, stoutly. “It’s debts.” But peace was restored, and the two consented to go on with the prayer.

When they came to the end the little Presbyterian said “Amen,” giving the flat “a” of the dissenters, while the little Episcopalian intoned “Ah-men,” with the broad sound to the first vowel.

²³⁶ *Jude* 1:3.

“Amen,” repeated the Presbyterian.

“Ah-men,” said the Episcopalian, with conviction.

They were only saved from another encounter by being bundled into bed. When the door was closed upon them each was still maintaining her idea of pronunciation.

3. Biblical Times

Present Truth, March 13, 1902

SOMETIMES when we speak of mighty works done through men by the power of God, we are met by the words,

“Yes, but that was in Biblical times,”

—implying that such things cannot be expected now. True enough, they were done in the times of which the Bible speaks; that is self-evident; but why does the Bible tell them? Simply in order that we may know what ought to be in all times. The Bible was not written at the time the events occurred of which it speaks; and the fact that it relates them has no effect upon the time in which they took place. The men who did those things did not break the model. Christ is the Model, and He is the Man for all times. There are more Bibles in the world now than there have ever been before, since the world began; therefore these times ought pre-eminently to be “Biblical Times,” and so they would be if every one who has it and read it, received it as it is indeed, the Living Word of the Living God.

4. Preach the Word

Present Truth, April 3, 1902

IT IS not an enemy that gives this account of the ordinary preacher's methods, in the *Methodist Times*, but one of their number, who is stating his own experience:

When a preacher is young—I illustrate from the life of a preacher because it is the life best known to me—he will take his text and then go hunting through all the commentaries he has and through all the sermons; after that he will look up his note books and his poetry, every little writer that has ever written on any subject remotely connected with his text he will feel compelled to consult, and so he will overload his own thought and stifle his own imagination. I remember that period well.

Sad to say, he does not deprecate the plan of going everywhere except to the Bible for the message, but only the use of so many books instead of the preacher's own imagination. But to every preacher and teacher who reads *Present Truth*, and there are many, we would say,

2 Timothy 4

² Preach the Word,

—and that only, rightly and conscientiously avoiding man's opinions, and your own imagination. The Scriptures are an inexhaustible mine, a never-failing well, and the variety of subjects and wonders of truth far transcend the highest flights of human imagination.

5. The Wrong Way and the Right Way

Present Truth, April 3, 1902

IN A popular journal not long since a father related the following incident for the benefit of other parents:

“What was the ‘ginning of the world?’” asked a six-year hopeful at breakfast. “That’s a long story that we will talk about after supper,” I replied—for my children usually have a story read or told them all together before bedtime. So that evening, in simple language that the youngest could comprehend, and that therefore was interesting to the older children, the various theories of the world’s formation were briefly described. The Bible story, the teachings of geology, the ether rings as the origin of atoms,—all this was set forth in simple language without bias, concluding (as we had begun) with the remark that after all but little was actually known, though many theories were entertained.

The way in which the story was received, from the youngest up, their questions, comprehension and various opinions, were a revelation that charmed and benefited their father even more than the talk had helped them. Children never forget such talks, and their attitude of mind on these occasions is treasure in the father’s heart more and more as his sons and daughters become older and too soon to grow away from him.

“Pity ’tis, ’tis true,” that “children never forget such talks,” and consequently loose habits of thought are implanted in them. They are taught human opinions and speculations instead of the truth, and so do not acquire the habit of distinguishing sharply between truth and error. In this case the children were no wiser when the father had finished his talk than when he began; and what was still worse, the impression was conveyed that the Bible narrative is on a level with the conjectures of men, and so they were deprived of any standard by which to judge. Equally bad was the fact that they were left with the idea that they really knew a great deal, because they have heard a lot of words, and had learned to express their “opinions,” which were based upon nothing.

Contrast with this the account, given by Mr. Edgerton R. Young, missionary to the Cree Indians, of the way in which those simple children of the forest received the truth in its purity. After telling of the lesson he had given them in reading, he proceeds:

Then we opened our bundle of Bibles, and, passing them around as far as they would go, I had them all turn to the first verse of the first chapter of *Genesis*. After some explanation of a few additional signs which they there saw upon the printed page, and which give some variation to the sound of the syllabic character to which they are attached, we began the study of the verse. Of course our progress at first was slow. It could not be otherwise under such circumstances. But we patiently persevered, and it was not very long ere they were able to read in their own language: "Mawache Nistum Kaesamaneto Keosetou Kesik Mena Askee," (In the beginning God created the heaven and earth).

When they have acquired the ability to read this verse for themselves, and had grasped a little of its meaning, there was another burst of delight. That first verse of *Genesis* is very suggestive and full of meaning to anyone, no matter how learned, who strives to investigate it. It is in itself the first chapter of God's revelation of himself to man, and has long occupied the attention and study of the most godly and profound. Here, for the first time, it was being read by a company of poor Indians just emerging from paganism. But they were sharp and keen, and able to grasp a new truth, and so when the first verse opened before them with a wondrous meaning, great was their delight in amazement.

"Now we know all about it!" some of them shouted. "The Kaesa-Maneto (the great God) made all these things, the heaven and the earth."

Others said: "Our fathers talked about it in their wigwams, and wondered how all these things came as they are; but they had to confess that they were in darkness, and knew nothing. But now we know it! We know it!"

Over and over again they read the verse until they had thoroughly committed it to memory. And in after days, at many a campfire and in many a hunting lodge, it was repeated to those

who had not heard it, but who, on hearing it, were also filled with gratification and delight at the answer which it gave to what had long been a subject of perplexity and awe.

Who cannot see that the Indians had by far the advantage of the white children? They *knew* the exact truth, and moreover did not have their minds cumbered with a lot of rubbish. "We know it! We know it!" they exclaimed in their simple joy; and they did indeed know it. The reception of real truth from the mouth of the Lord gives a joy that can never be known by those who are filled with the pride of their own opinions. And it gives equal joy to the unlettered barbarian and the cultured philosopher. The *Bible Society Reporter* tells how a learned Brahman, who became a Christian minister, had his first lesson in Christianity.

While waiting to see a gentleman at whose house he had called, he took up the book lying on the table, and opened at the first page. There he read:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." Being familiar with the Hindu Cosmogony, so prolonged, abstruse, and wearisome, the brevity, dignity, and self-evident truth of this assertion so impressed him that he at once procured a Bible and read it carefully, with the ultimate result that he became a whole-hearted and avowed believer both in the written and the living Word.

Some parents are afraid of prejudicing the minds of their children, and so refrain from giving them positive knowledge. This is a sin. Truth should have the first place. No Christian parent should allow a child to grow to the age of six years without knowing the beginning of all things. But do not make the mistake of trying to "simplify the words of Scripture." That is like trying to make some light clear. Do not give the Bible narrative in your own language. Read them from the Bible, and when you have read a story once, the children will want to hear it again; and you can read the stories one after another again and again, until the truths are indelibly impressed on the young minds in the very

words which the Spirit teaches. Thus even the babes may become possessed of wisdom that is hidden from the wise and prudent, and which will be an effectual safeguard against all forms of infidelity; for the vagaries of human conjecture will always be insipid to one who has acquired a taste for simple, solid truth.



6. Christian Evidence

Present Truth, June 19, 1902

THE call for something on the “Christian Evidences,” is quite frequent in the religious papers, from young Christians who are brought in contact with scoffers. They want to know what books will furnish them with the matter wherewith to meet the arguments of unbelievers. There is nothing in the world that can take the place of the Bible. The Lord says,

Proverbs 22

²⁰ Have not I written to you excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

²¹ That I may make you note the certainty of the words of truth; that you might answer the words of truth to them that send unto you.

But those words of truth must be in the heart and life of the Christian, as is indicated in the verses immediately preceding those just quoted:

¹⁷ Bow down your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart unto my knowledge.

¹⁸ For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; they shall withal be fitted in your lips.

If they are not in the life, they will not be fitted in the lips, but will have a strange sound. But coming from the heart, they will fit the lips naturally, and will have a convincing power. This is the same “evidence” that is referred to by the Apostle Peter:

1 Peter 3

¹⁵ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

The best “Christian Evidence” is the life of Christ.

Like every other special miracle wrought by Christ, the giving of the manna was to teach us to recognize God at work all the

time doing the same thing. When He rained bread from heaven, it was that the people might learn that it is what He is always doing. Our daily bread is just as truly rained down to us from heaven as was that of the Israelites.

Psalms 78

²³ [He] commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

²⁴ And rained down manna upon them to eat.

And even so,

Isaiah 55

¹⁰ The rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and *bread to the eater*.

Nahum 1

³ The clouds are the dust of His feet,

—and...

Psalms 65

¹¹ All His paths drop fatness.

So not only the Israelites in the wilderness, but all the heathen, even at that same time, and we ourselves, have eaten bread rained down from heaven. Indeed, we never ate any other. To the idolaters at Lystra, the Apostle Paul said that although God had suffered all nations to walk in their own ways,

Acts 14

¹⁷ He left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

And this witness received into our hearts day by day with our food, makes us His witnesses. What kind of witnesses are we? Are we faithful witnesses? or have we by our faithless lives denied the Lord, saying that He is not among us?

7. The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

Present Truth, October 16, 1902

Jeremiah 51

¹⁴ The Lord of hosts...

¹⁵ ...has made the earth by His power, He has established it by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heaven by His understanding.

Psalms 136

¹ O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endures for ever.

⁵ To Him that by wisdom made the heavens; for His mercy endures for ever.

THE Apostle Paul, to whom was given grace to proclaim...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...the unsearchable riches of Christ;

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ,

—desired that the hearts of all men...

Colossians 2

² ...might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledging of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,

³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now when we read these last two texts in connection with the first, we see that the extent of the heavens is the line by which God's wisdom and understanding is measured. When we look at them what do we find? The following from *The Story of the Stars*, by George F. Chambers, F.R.A.S., will serve to start us on our search:

Secchi noted the following experiment as one that he often tried with interesting results. After taking a glance at some particular part of the heavens, he would transfer his eye to the finder

of the great telescope at the Roman College at Rome, and would see in this subordinate telescope, whose field was no larger than $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$, as many stars, as were to be seen in the 13° or 14° grasped by the naked eye.

Passing then to his great telescope, armed with an eye-piece showing only an arc of 15 feet, or one-fourth the area of the field of his finder, he would still see as many stars as in the finder; proceeding yet further to diminish the field by increasing the power, the number of the stars would scarcely diminish, because, though the area was curtailed, yet the increased magnifying power revealed minute stars which had previously escaped notice. Thus it came about that in certain localities it was possible to see in a field no more than $1/12^\circ$ in diameter, as many stars as were visible to the naked eye in a field 13° in diameter.

This train of thought will readily enable the general reader to realize the fact that the larger our telescopes the more stars we can discern; in other words, that as we cannot say for a certainty how large our telescopes might become, so accordingly we cannot say when stars hitherto unseen will cease to be invisible. So that we may indeed say with Galileo that the stars are *innumerable*.

But we can go still further; for where the largest telescopes fail, photography comes in to help supply the deficiency. The sensitive plate is exposed to a portion of the heavens where the most powerful telescopes revealed only one or two stars, and, after the lapse of hours, the impression of the light from thousands of invisible stars will be seen. Now there is no more ground for saying that we have seen all that the heavens contain, and than there was when only the naked eye or the telescope of low power was used; and we are compelled to conclude that with more perfect viewing powers, we could go on and on for ever, always discovering something new.

The mind of man staggers at the thought of the immense distance of those bright stars, the light from which requires hours to make itself visible on the photographic plate. Suppose now that we could be transported, with our telescope and photographic ap-

paratus to these inconceivably distant climes, and repeat our observations in the same direction as before, we should without doubt obtain the same result; and so we could go on eternally, so boundless is God's universe.

Now remember that the heavens were spread out by God's understanding, and we see something of what is meant by...

Ephesians 3

⁸ ...the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Colossians 2

³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Isaiah 40

²⁶ [He] brings out their host by number; He calls them all by names.

They are but the expression of His thought, for they are constantly in His mind, and were in His mind before they were created. Well may we exclaim with the psalmist,

Psalms 92

⁵ O Lord, how great are your works! and your thoughts are very deep.

Well, now, it is just these "unsearchable riches" that are contained in God's Word; for...

Psalms 33

⁶ By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made.

God's Word is the expression of His thought—the same thought that comprehends the boundless universe. Thus we see the impossibility of the Scriptures ever being explored to their depths by any man; and we are encouraged to devote ourselves to the study of them, knowing that they afford the means of endless development and culture of our minds.

8. The Perfect Life; and the Best Help to the Understanding of the Bible

Present Truth, October 16, 1902

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Perfect Life; and the Best Help to the Understanding of the Bible

I have a great, longing desire to be a true and perfect Christian; but when I look back on a day gone, I find several things done that ought not to have been done, and plenty of opportunities let slip. I often hear Salvationists give their testimony, saying that they have lived without sin; but I cannot understand it. I never feel satisfied with myself.

I also have a great desire to know more about God, and should so like to know about God's plan. What book would you advise me to get, that would help me? I should esteem it a favor if you would advise me about the books on God's plan; and also what books are best to help me to study the Scriptures.

THE best thing in the world to enable one to understand the Scriptures is the Bible itself. There are books that lead one to the Scriptures, opening them up to the understanding, just as it is the mission of *Present Truth* to do; and of these I cannot think of any that will help you to trace the one purpose running through the whole Bible better than the three following:

- *Patriarchs and Prophets*;
- *The Great Controversy*; and
- *The Everlasting Covenant*,

—all of which may be obtained at the office of the *International Tract Society*, Ltd., 451 Holloway Road, London, N.

The Bible Is the Source

But the Bible itself is the book that has to be studied in order to get an understanding of it; and these that I have mentioned are

valuable simply because they lead the reader to the Scriptures as the source of all knowledge.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Scriptures are hard to understand. How can they be, when they give understanding?

Psalm 119

¹⁰⁴ Through your precepts I get understanding.

The Scriptures are the Word of the Lord; and,

Proverbs 2

⁶ The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Patient Effort

The trouble with most people is that they have not patience to study the Bible. They want to understand it without taking the trouble to become familiar with it. People will ordinarily spend five times as much time reading what somebody has said about the Bible as they will to learn what the Bible itself says.

You can see that this is unreasonable. How can one expect to understand the meaning of any book with which one is unfamiliar? It is self-evident that if you wish to know what anybody means, you must know what he says. Now I can assure you that if you will just give your attention in earnest to the Bible, reading it indeed, not merely pronouncing the words, you will understand it. But perhaps I should explain a little further.

One Piece at a Time

In the first place, do not think to grasp the entire Bible at once. You cannot do it, anymore than you could pick up and carry ten thousand blocks of wood in your hands at one time. But by taking only one or two pieces at a time, you could move a whole timber yard; and so you can grasp the Bible. By taking one step at a time one can go from London to Edinburgh; but no one can cover it all at one step. So the way for one to do, who really wishes to understand the Bible, is to start with some portion of it, and some book,

to which one is especially attracted, and make a thorough study of it.

How shall you do this? You will say, as so many others do, that this is just what you want to know: How to study the Bible. Well, there is no magic, no mystery, in it. Simply go to work to store your mind with what it says. The Apostle Paul gives the rule, in writing to the young man Timothy:

2 Timothy 2

⁶ Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

This will require more close and careful reading than to master a newspaper article; just as a close-grained, hard piece of wood requires more strength to cut than a soft piece does; but you know from what you get the most service.

Seek for Understanding

Having settled on the portion of Scripture to which you intend to devote special study, begin at the beginning, and read. Here I must explain what I mean by reading. As already stated, I do not mean merely to pronounce the words. There are some things that can be grasped at a glance; even some parts of the Bible can be understood (superficially, of course) by the most cursory reading; but whether it requires little or much time and application, real reading means the intelligent grasping of the thought expressed by the words.

Here is where reading becomes study, and not simple recreation or amusement. You must read again and again until you remember; for it must be evident to you that one reads to no purpose unless one remembers. To read that which one does not wish to remember is a waste of time, and mere intellectual dissipation, unfitting the mind to lay hold of that which is useful; just as the eating of that which does not build up the system, weakens the digestive powers, and makes one less capable of enjoying real food. So as we should not waste time reading what we do not

wish to remember, when we read what is worth remembering we must read it so attentively that we shall certainly remember it.

Reading to Obtain the Thought

This means repetition, but not slavish parrot-like repetition. Keep this distinction in mind: We read for the *thought*, and not for the mere words; but since the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, the thought is put into language that will best express it (barring defects in translation); therefore in our effort to get the exact thought fixed in our mind, we insensibly get the exact form of words there also. In short, we simply more or less consciously analyze the sentences and paragraphs as we read them, thus perceiving the relation of each part to every other part, and do this so thoroughly that they stay with us by the power of association.

Read an entire book through in this way, until you can, without it, recall its entire contents in the course of a morning's walk,—until you can see it spread out as a whole before your mind's eye, just as you can the town in which you have lived for years. Now you know what the writer *says*; you have it all in connection; and now you cannot fail to see that there really is a connection in it,—that there is a continuous thread running through the whole. The meaning reveals itself. Now you see that the reason why you did not understand the book before was that you did not really know what it said.

You can see, provided you believe what I have here written, that one must proceed with the Bible just as one would with a law book. The law student knows that there is but one way to an understanding of law, and that is by actual mastery of the contents of the law books; by close application to what they say. Only there is no manner of comparison between the study of human law and Divine law. The same amount of study put on the Bible, that the law student puts on his text books, will yield infinitely greater returns. One can master the contents of a portion of the Bible in less time than is required for the same amount in any law book of purely human production; and then we have this advan-

tage, that we are sure that everything we study does really mean something. The Word of God is good seed;²³⁷ it is pure life, that germinates and multiplies.

An Unfathomable Well

I have several times spoken about mastering the Scriptures. I do not wish to be understood as conveying the idea that one can master them in the sense of knowing all that they have to reveal. That can never be done; and in another article in this number it is shown why this is impossible.²³⁸ The better acquainted one becomes with the Bible, or any part of it, the more will one see that only the outer edge of the surface of it has been touched. The Bible is a well of infinite, unfathomable depth,—an immeasurable expanse; but we can master it in this sense, that we have a clear and firm grasp of what it says, and may know that we know what we do know of it.

Understanding One Book Opens Up Others

When you have done the work that I have indicated with a single book of the Bible, you will find to your delighted surprise that every other book of the Bible is more open to your understanding; for the Bible is one whole, having a single purpose, which may be likened both to a thread and to a broad, measureless plain; and the life and the fullness of the whole is in each part. This study will have given you a love for Bible study, such as you never had before, and you will by far prefer to search out its treasures for yourself, to having somebody else dig them out and present them to you.

Dependence on the Holy Spirit

I should not leave this subject without saying that in order to get the perfect understanding of the Scriptures one must continually seek and depend on the Holy Spirit, whose testimony they are.

²³⁷ Luke 8:11.

²³⁸ This article is titled "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ," and is article 7 in this section.

Without the Spirit's aid, all our zeal and application will be in vain.

Job 32

⁸ There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

But while everything depends on the Spirit, we must work as though everything depended on us; for the Holy Spirit is not given to save people the trouble of making exertion, but, on the contrary, to stir them up to activity. We may, then, in a word, say that the helps to an understanding of the Bible are the Spirit of God and application.

A Longing for Perfection

We come now to the consideration of the first part of your communication. You want to live the perfect Christian life, yet you can never be satisfied with yourself. That is good. It is good that you want to live a perfect Christian life, and it is good that you are not satisfied with yourself. May the Lord always keep that same longing and that same dissatisfaction always present with you. A few words of Scripture will help you here.

Righteousness comes from God, and not from ourselves.

Romans 5

¹⁹ As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

Titus 3

⁴ ...the kindness and love of God our Saviour [appears to us],

⁵ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

⁶ Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

⁷ That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Romans 9

¹⁶ So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,

Philippians 2

¹³ For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Psalms 18

³⁰ As for God, His way is perfect, [and]

³² It is God that girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect.

Romans 3

²⁷ Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

Ephesians 2

⁸ For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast;

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them.

Therefore the true Christian must continually say,

Galatians 2

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

The apostle who was best acquainted with the Lord, and lived closest to Him, wrote these words:

1 John 1

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

You see the point? We are sinners. The chiefest apostle counted himself the chief of sinners; and just because he was the chief of sinners, the grace of Christ was manifested in him in chiefest measure, in making him what he was, as an encouragement to others.²³⁹

We are to confess ourselves sinners, but to confess Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Sinners, yet kept from sin by the power of His grace. Sinners cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. It is while we walk in the light, that is, in Him, that His blood cleanses us from all sin; the continual cleansing is necessary, in order to keep us free from the sin that is in us.

Philippians 3

¹³ Reaching forth...

¹⁴ I press forward,

—is the Christian's motto. If he were satisfied with himself he would not do that. And yet he may all the time be living the perfect Christian life. Indeed, he would not be living it, if he were satisfied with himself:

2 Corinthians 10

¹⁸ For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

1 John 1

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ [But] if we confess our sins,...

²³⁹ 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 1 Corinthians 15:10.

—and we do so only as we confess the Lord’s righteousness,—we are in accord with the Lord, and *He* declares us righteous. He tells us that we are sinners; if we say that we are not, we make Him a liar, and our declaration of sinlessness is itself a proof of sin; but when we, looking at His cross, say that we are sinners, He says,

“You are right.”

Day by day as the Lord created the earth, He saw that “it was good;” yet it was not complete. The plant may be perfect at every stage of its growth; yet it must still keep on developing; for if at any stage it should become satisfied with its growth, and should cease developing, it would be imperfect.

The problem, then, is, to keep sinful men free from sin. How can it be done? Only through the Word of God,—the life.

Psalms 17

⁴ By the word of your lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

Revelation 12

¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

John 15

³ Now are you clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And thus, remembering that it is by incorruptible seed, by the word of God which lives and abides for ever, that we are born again,²⁴⁰ we come to the statement that:

1 John 3

⁹ Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The shield of faith, which is by the Word of God, enables him to...

²⁴⁰ 1 Peter 1:23.

Ephesians 6

¹⁶ ...quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,

—and thus he...

John 5

¹⁸ ...keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.

The treasure is in earthen vessels,

2 Corinthians 4

⁷ ...that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us.

Even in the world to come we shall be satisfied only in contemplating the virtue of Christ; and our songs will be...

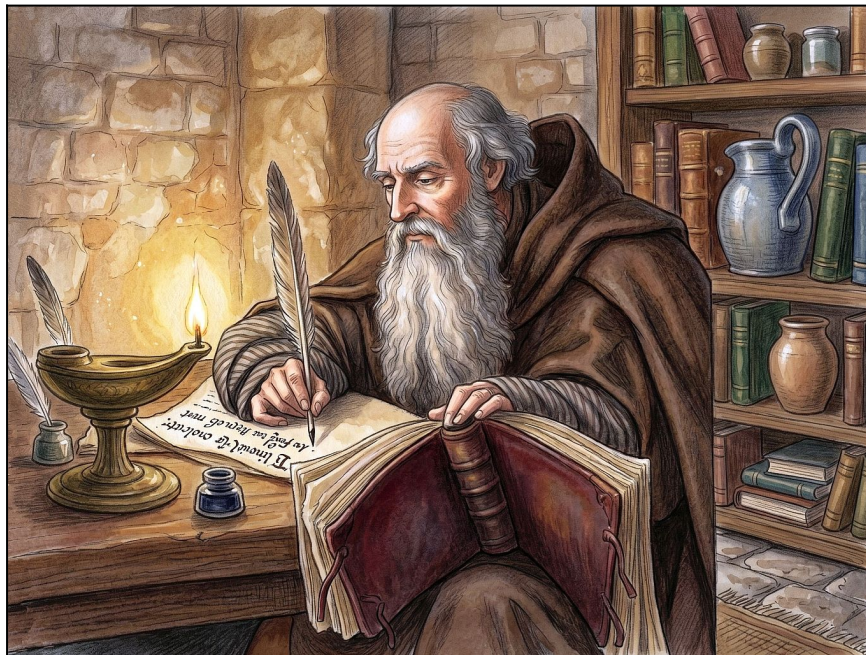
Revelation 1

⁵ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood.



9. The Secret of Reformation

Present Truth, November 20, 1902



WHEN Wycliffe was translating, or was about to translate, the Bible into the English language, he wrote these words:

As the faith of the church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in their true meaning the better; and inasmuch as secular men should assuredly understand the faith they profess, that faith should be taught them in whatever language may be best known to them.

Forasmuch, also, as the doctrines of our faith are more clearly and exactly expressed in the Scriptures than they may probably be by priests,—seeing, if I may speak, that many prelates are but too ignorant of Holy Scripture, while others conceal many parts of it; and as the verbal instructions of priests have many other defects, the conclusion is abundantly manifest that believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true masters of their

faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand.

For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instruction, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded in Holy Writ,—since the Scriptures contain the whole truth. And this translation of them into English should therefore do at least this good, namely, placing priests and bishops above suspicion as to the parts of it which they profess to explain.

Other means, such as the friars, prelates, the pope, may all prove defective; and to provide against this, Christ and His apostles evangelized the greater portion of the world, by making known the Scriptures to the people in their own language. To this end, indeed, did the Holy Spirit endow them with the knowledge of tongues. Why, then, should not the living disciples of Christ do in this respect as they did?

The work of translating the Scriptures into the language of the people has now been almost completed. Since the days of Tyndale it has been an easy matter for anyone to get a copy of the Bible in the English language, and the book has been translated into almost every language under heaven.

Still the work of the Reformation is not complete. It is not enough that the Bible should be furnished in the language of the people; it must be read and studied by the people. It is of little use to have the Bible if the words of man are to be taken as to what it means, instead of reading it for one's self. To too great an extent at the present day, as in the days of Christ when the people had the Bible in their own tongue, the fear of God is taught by the commandments of men, rather than by the Word of God. So the work of the true teacher is to take the Bible which the people have ready to their hand, and bring them face to face with it.

To be a follower of the Reformers does not mean to believe just what they believed, and nothing more. To be a worthy follower of the Reformers is to be actuated by the same spirit that moved them. That was loyalty to the Word of God. Their principle was



William Tyndale

He gave his life to give the Word of God to the people

that the Bible should settle all questions; that it, and it alone was the truth. They did not know all that the Bible teaches. No man has ever yet known it all. Sometimes, also, they were mistaken in their views of Scripture, and made the common mistake of teach-

ing what they *thought* instead of what they *knew*. Whether a man is right or wrong, if we follow the man, we shall surely go wrong; for at the best we shall get only partial truth; but if we follow the Scriptures just as they have read, we cannot make a mistake. Only they are true followers of the Reformers who have the same loyalty to the word that they had, regardless of what they thought about certain points.

Let the question which Wycliffe asked be pondered well: Why should not the living disciples of Christ do as the disciples of old did, in bringing the Bible to the people, that they may read it without the interpretation of men? When this is done as it should be, there will be a greater reformation than has ever yet been known. The true teacher does not tell what he *thinks* about the Word, for that is but to preach himself, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. His work is to lead men to the fountain of life, where whosoever will can drink.

10. Roman Catholics and the Bible

Present Truth, November 20, 1902

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Roman Catholics and the Bible

Is it true that the Catholics gave us the Bible? If not, what are we indebted to for our present Bible? Are there any *original* manuscripts to prove the authenticity of the Scriptures?

IT IS certainly not true that the Catholics gave us the Bible. Only a very slight acquaintance with history and with present conditions is necessary to make this apparent. For example, in countries wholly under Roman Catholic influence, as Spain, Mexico, and some parts of South America, the Bible is unknown. The Bible was a forbidden book in Italy, and was totally unknown in Rome, until Victor Emmanuel freed the country from Papal domination. Even in Catholic Germany today, it is almost impossible to procure a copy of the Bible. I am well acquainted with a young man who tried in vain to purchase a Bible in Cologne. There are places in France where even the booksellers do not know the Book by name.

Every reader of history knows at what great cost the Bible was given to the English people. The translators had to do their work in secret, and it was only at the risk of his life that anybody had anything to do with circulating the copies that were printed. Catholic prelates, acting under the Pope's orders, burned the Book singly and by whole editions, wherever they could find it; and solely because of his zeal to give the Bible to his countrymen, Tyndale was burned at the stake.

These things being so, how absurd to claim that the Catholics gave us the Bible! When they have taken, and still take, every means possible to keep it away from their own people, who can think that it was they who gave it to Protestants? Not only did they keep it away from the common people, but, at least before the Reformation, the priests themselves were totally ignorant of it. Luther had been a priest for a long time before he had ever

seen a copy of the Bible; and he actually supposed that the few extracts in the Prayer Book were all the Scriptures there were, until he accidentally found a chained copy in the library.



Furthermore, the Catholic Church claims that the Bible is not by any means a sure or even a safe guide in matters of religion, and uses only such portions as can be made to appear to support its pretension, while it boldly contradicts others. Now, since it claims to be superior to the Bible, and urges its own change in the matter of baptism and the Sabbath, as proof that the Church, and not the Bible, is the sure guide, it is evident that if it had been left to Roman Catholics, the Bible never would have been translated into the language of the people. I was about to write that if it had been left to them it would never have been written; but that is self-evident, for the Bible carries its own proof that it did not come by the will of any man. It is its own unimpeachable testimony to the fact that it is of Divine inspiration.

I have already indicated to what we are indebted for our present Bible. John Wycliffe and William Tyndale in England, Martin Luther in Germany, are the names that stand most prominent in Bible translation. They prepared the way for others. A little book entitled, *How We Got Our Bible*, by Prof. A. H. Sayce, published by the Oxford Press, gives briefly, but very clearly, and in simple language, the fascinating story of Bible translation. Everybody could procure it and read it with profit.²⁴¹

There are no “original manuscripts” in existence, but there are some very ancient copies. The manuscripts written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, etc., are not to be found; but our knowledge of the correctness of the Bible as we have it translated is not lessened by that fact; for the substantial agreement of the numerous copies makes the case far more sure than it could be if we had only the original copy of each writer’s manuscripts. The one copy might lie under the suspicion of having been tampered with, and changed; but when we have many manuscripts, copied by different persons, and at different times, there can be no doubt

²⁴¹ PP Editor’s note: I was not able to locate a book by this name, authored by A. H. Sayce. Instead, there was a popular little book by this title, authored by J. Patterson Smyth. Perhaps that is the work Waggoner is referring to.

that we have the Bible substantially as written by the men were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now the question remains,

“How do we know that the Scriptures as we have them are authentic? How may we know that they are indeed the word of God?”

As to the first part of the question, there is the same proof that there is of any other ancient book. All the books of the Old Testament were in use in the time of Christ, as the New Testament and the controversial writings of heathen authors show; and this is in itself a further proof that we are not indebted to the Catholic Church for the Bible. It was in existence in its entirety, before that church had any existence. The manuscripts that are now in existence, from which present translations are made, were copied at different places and at different times from the originals, and their agreement in all essentials is proof that the Bible has not been corrupted to any appreciable extent; while the variations, due to slips of the pens of the copyists, show that there was no collusion, and thus make us more sure than if all were exactly alike.

But when all has been said that may be said as to the authenticity of the documents, we have still to answer the question as to how we know the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. Here, as in the case of Jesus, no testimony can be received from man. It carries its credentials in itself. When God spoke from Mount Sinai, the people who heard did not need anybody to tell them whose voice it was. Even so it is today. Men may scoff at the Bible, and deny the validity or perpetuity of the law; but when the Spirit sends the arrow of conviction into their hearts, they know that the law is of God, and that it is of everlasting force. The best, therefore, and the surest proof that the Bible is really the Word of God, is personal acquaintance with its Author. As the officers who were sent to take Jesus, came back and said,

John 7

⁴⁶ Never man spoke like this man,

—even so those who read and hear the words of the Book are constrained to admit that they are not the production of man. When the conceited young man flippantly remarked to the College Professor that the book of *Proverbs* did not show much skill, the old man silenced him with the sententious reply,

“Make a few.”

The Bible shows us ourselves, not only as nobody on the earth could do, but as we ourselves could not. Hidden things are brought to light, which we recognize as pertaining to us as soon as we see them, but which no man could know. The Scriptures reveal the presence of One who can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart; and not only do they lay open human nature, but all creation as well. Through them we get understanding of nature both seen and unseen. All that is needed to convince anybody that the Scriptures are indeed the living word of the living God, is close acquaintance with them.

Psalm 34

⁸ Taste and see.

There never was a time when the Scriptures were so easy of access, and it is no doubt for this reason that Satan is using every means to undermine its authority over the minds and hearts of the people. The Catholic Church kept the Bible away from the people as long as it could, and now the Protestant Church, through its foremost men, is laboring to make it of none effect. Precepts and miracles are being set aside as mere fabrications, and the prospects are that it will not be long before those who follow the “leaders” will be wholly deprived of the light of life.

But God never leaves himself without witness which the poorest and most illiterate can understand.

John 7 [RV]

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.



Bishop Tunstall burning the Bible in London

Then let every lover of truth,—every one who sincerely wishes to know the right way,—give diligence to become acquainted for himself with the Sacred Book, and he will have proof of the saying,

Psalm 119

¹³⁰ The opening of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.



11. Light from the Word

Present Truth, December 4, 1902

WHEN Moses came down from the mount, where he had been for forty days receiving commandments for the people, he did not know that...

Exodus 34

²⁹ ...the skin of his face shown while He talked with him.

The Hebrew is, literally, “in His talking with him.” It was in the talking that the light shone forth from the face of Moses, like the sun’s rays. In this we have a vivid illustration and demonstration of the truth expressed in...

Psalms 119

¹³⁰ The entrance of your words gives light.

Proverbs 6

²³ The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.

The righteousness of God’s people is the keeping of the law:

Deuteronomy 6

²⁹ And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.

And thus it is that those who now hide the Word of light in their hearts will, when the Lord appears,

Matthew 13

⁴³ ...shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

12. The Gospel in the Old Testament

Present Truth, December 11, 1902

THE Gospel of God to which the Apostle Paul declared himself to be separated, was the Gospel...

Romans 1

² ...which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures;

—literally, the Gospel which He had before announced or preached. This shows us that the Old Testament contains the Gospel, and also that the Gospel in the Old Testament is the same Gospel that is in the New. It is the only Gospel that the apostle preached. That being the case, it should not be thought strange for men to believe the Old Testament, and to refer to it as of equal authority with the New Testament.

We read that...

Galatians 3

⁸ [God] preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed.

The Gospel preached to the people when Paul lived, was the same Gospel that was preached unto the ancient Israelites.

Hebrews 4

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them.

Moses wrote of Christ; and so much of the Gospel is to be found in his writings that a man who does not believe what Moses wrote, cannot believe in Christ.

John 5

⁴⁶ For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

⁴⁷ But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

Acts 10

⁴³ To Him gave all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

Paul had only the Old Testament when he went to Thessalonica,

Acts 17

² ...and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures,

³ Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.

Timothy had nothing in his childhood and youth but the Old Testament writings, and the apostle wrote to him:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁴ Continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them;

¹⁵ And that 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.

Then go to the Old Testament with the expectation of finding Christ and His righteousness there, and you will be made wiser unto salvation. Do not discriminate between Moses and Paul, between David and Peter, between Jeremiah and James, between Isaiah and John.

13. How to Master the Truth

Present Truth, December 25, 1902

IT WOULD be well if all seekers after truth—all students of the Word—would speedily come to an understanding of the principles so tersely expressed by Phillips Brooks, that...

Not by the sharpening of the intellect to supernatural acuteness, but by the submission of the nature to its true authority,

—man conquers truth; that...

Not by agonizing struggles over the contradictory evidence, but by the harmony with Him in whom the answers to all our doubts are folded, a harmony with Him brought by obedience to Him, our doubts must be enlightened.

A grasp of this simple principle would save days and months, and even years, of fruitless and wearing “investigation.” Nobody ever comes to a knowledge of the truth by study. We must first know the truth, by revelation from God, and then we spend the rest of our lives, even through eternity, in studying it.



1903-1904



1. A Happy New Year!

Present Truth, January 1, 1903

THIS wish will today be uttered by hundreds of thousands of voices; and though the well-known words often come to the lips as a matter of mere custom, without any thought, it is from the heart that we here wish the thousands of *Present Truth* readers a Happy New Year. We have seen the faces of but few of them, but our unseen congregation seems very near to us each week as we write. With some of them we have had most precious personal correspondence, and for all we feel a personal interest, and we would that they might be happy indeed.

There is no reason why this wish may not be fulfilled for every reader. It is the knowledge of the fact that we have a message for the people which brings joy wherever it is received, that makes us confident that it is no vain wish that we express.

1 John 1

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

² (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

³ That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.

The Bible is emphatically the book of happiness. It should be known by every reader that the word “blessed,” so often found in the Scriptures, means “happy.” The Bible is the blessed Book which presents the way of happiness. It shall be our purpose throughout the year to keep this way of true and everlasting happiness constantly before the readers, and even then we can by no means exhaust the theme. In order that our wish for a Happy New Year may be practical, we shall begin now to present a few

items that go to make up the “fullness of joy” that is the portion of those who live in God’s presence.

We begin with...

Proverbs 3

¹³ Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding.

¹⁴ For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; and all the things that you can desire are not to be compared with her.

¹⁶ Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

¹⁸ She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her; and happy is every one that retains her.

A long life full of everything that the heart can desire sums up almost everybody’s idea of perfect happiness; and here we find it, and more. Life that has no end, and pleasures and riches far beyond all that the heart can desire, are the portion of those who get and retain wisdom from God. And what is this wisdom?

Job 28

²⁸ Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Remembering that *blessed* means *happy*, we read further.

Psalms 1

¹ Happy is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.

Yes, happy is the man whose meditation shows him something of the magnitude of God’s holy law. Such a one will never work

against his own interest by seeking to depreciate that on which his eternal happiness depends.

Again,

Psalm 32

¹ Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

² Happy is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin.

This happiness is as free for all as God's air. His name is forgiveness, and His wondrous works declare that His name is near. They that know His name will trust in Him, and we read:

Psalm 2

¹² Happy are all they that put their trust in Him.

Jeremiah 17

⁷ Happy is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

The world is full of weary and worn-out men and women, who think that life has no pleasure; many of them foolishly think to find happiness, or at least rest from unhappiness, in death. Our message is full of assurance for all such. Life, not death is happiness. The Lord gives rest to all who come, to Him; for His presence is rest.²⁴² As the token of this blessed rest, He gives us His Sabbath day, which is His memorial, revealing Him, He says:

Isaiah 58

¹³ If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor speaking your own words:

¹⁴ Then shall you delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Here is happiness without limit.

²⁴² *Exodus* 33:14.

Lastly, for the present, this same Lord, whose presence gives rest, and who fills believers with...

Romans 15

¹³ ...all joy and peace,—

1 Peter 1

⁸ ...joy unspeakable and full of glory,

—even when unseen, is coming again very soon, that His believing, trusting ones may be with Him, and see His face. This is the glad message which will make a happy year, and every day of it new, for all who receive it. Therefore,

Psalms 96

¹ Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth.

² Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day.

³ Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people.

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

¹² Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

¹³ Before the Lord: FOR HE COMES, for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.

2. The White Light of Truth

Present Truth, January 1, 1903

Original title: Back Page

WITHOUT a knowledge of the Bible, all other knowledge is useless. It is like an ivory knife handle, set with jewels, but with no blade. Indeed, it is not even to be compared with that; for such a handle alone is of some value; but the wisdom of the world, apart from the wisdom of the cross, is foolishness. Only the Lord gives true wisdom; only out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

God spoke His word in time past “in many portions” and “by many turnings,” for thus the first words of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* read when literally rendered. God’s Word is one; for...

John 1

¹ ...the Word was God,

—and...

Deuteronomy 6

⁴ ...The Lord our God is one Lord.

One word embraces the universe and contains all truth. But our minds are too small and too weak to comprehend the whole of this word at once, and so God has broken it up into a multitude of fragments, and He turns each one of these truth crystals round and round, that we may see the light flashing from every side. New light shines from every one of its innumerable faces, yet it is all the same light. All the different hues combined make up the gloriously white light of truth.

3. Much More

Present Truth, January 1, 1903

MANY people who profess to love the Lord, and to follow Him, and who are really sincere in their purpose, are so misguided in their searching of the Scriptures that they are always endeavoring to minimize their force. They seem always to be afraid that they may believe more than God has promised. They limit God, and take care to keep well within bounds. Instead of seeking to find as much as possible in every text, they are ever trying to prove that the Scriptures do not mean very much.

That is not the way to get acquainted with God; for He is greater than man's thought. "Much more"²⁴³ is the motto for the Christian. However much we see in any portion of Scripture, we may be sure that there is much more in it for us. We can never exhaust the promises of God; therefore our endeavor should always be to find more and more for our faith to rest upon.

Remember that we cannot believe any good thing, however great, that is not true. God's mercy is upon us according as we hope in Him. Do you feel that you want more? Then believe that you receive it, and you shall have it.²⁴⁴

Have you on the Lord believed?
Still there's more to follow.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ *Matthew* 6:30, 7:11; *Luke* 11:13, 12:24, 28; *Romans* 5:9, 10, 15, 17, 20.; 2 *Corinthians* 3:9, 11; *Hebrews* 9:14.

²⁴⁴ *Mark* 11:24.

²⁴⁵ P. P. Bliss, *More to Follow*.

4. A Cup of Cold Water

Present Truth, January 15, 1903

A TOUCHING INCIDENT is related in connection with Martin Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms when he reached his lodgings after his memorable speech before the Emperor, a servant entered, bearing a silver jug. Presenting it to the Doctor, the bearer said,

"My master invites you to refresh yourself with this draught."

"Who is the prince," asked Luther, "who so graciously remembers me?"

It was the aged Duke Eric of Brunswick, one of the Papal members of the Diet. Luther raised the vessel to his lips, took a long draught and then putting it down, said,

"As this day Duke Eric has remembered me, so may the Lord Jesus Christ remember him in the hour of his last struggle."

Not long after this, Duke Eric of Brunswick lay dying. Seeing a young page standing by his bedside, he said to him,

"Take the Bible, and read in it to me."

The page, opening the Bible, read out these words:

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water in my name, because you belong to me, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."²⁴⁶

Duke Eric was refreshed in his turn. When his heart and strength were failing him, a golden cup was put to his lips, and he drank therefrom a draught from the water of life.

²⁴⁶ *Matthew* 10:42.

5. Authority for Truth

Present Truth, January 22, 1903

Original title: Back Page

NOTHING is true because it is written in a book. That is to say that no book is ever to be cited as authority for any truth, except it be some statement of a matter of observation. Whoever would teach a thing must teach it because it is so, and must be able to demonstrate that it is so, and not say that a book says so.

Of course the Bible is an exception, for it is of God. Even then, truths do not derive their truthfulness from the Bible, but are in the Bible because they are true. However, the Bible reveals the Source of truth, and therefore is always of final authority in any matter.



6. The Inspiration of the Almighty

Present Truth, January 22, 1903

Original title: Back Page

Job 32

⁸ There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

THERE can be no understanding apart from the inspiration of the Almighty. This reveals the necessity of studying the Bible, because...

2 Timothy 3

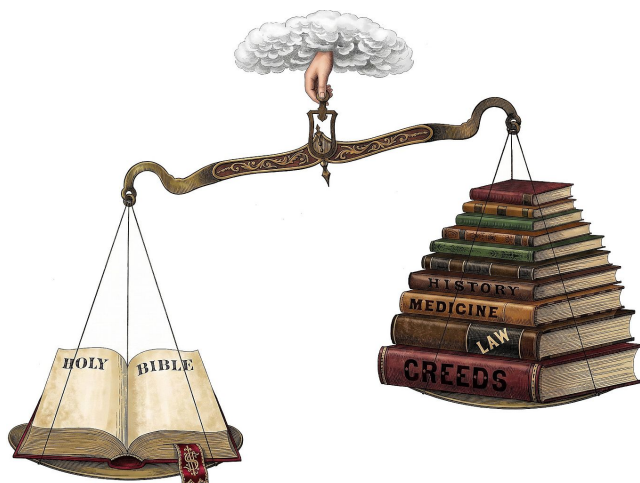
¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Psalms 19

⁷ The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

Then study God's Word, for in it is to be found wisdom greater than that of either the ancients or the moderns.



7. Seeking for Truth

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

IT IS one thing to believe a truth when all one's arguments and objections have been exhausted and shown to be groundless, and quite another thing to have the spirit of faith, which promptly perceives truth, and eagerly seizes upon it. The former condition is characteristic of a slave; the latter, of a free man. One who accepts truth as it were by compulsion, never knows the joy of it; such a one never makes progress, because he never believes more than he feels obliged to; and if at any time he finds a door of escape from it, he is in danger of taking advantage of it. But the person who is seeking for truth, and who has eyes to see, and ears to hear, will ever have new fields of delight opened up to him, and will be kept steadfast by the joy and peace he finds in believing.

Jeremiah 15

¹⁶ Your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.



8. Trying to Believe

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

“Can we make ourselves believe?” someone asks.

YES; most certainly; we can make ourselves believe anything we want to; but it is a very bad and foolish thing to do. Cases are not lacking, where a man told a story that he knew was false, and repeated it so often that at last he believed it. Nothing is easier than to make ourselves believe.

But God does not require anything of the kind. Only the devil demands that of people. Thus, God speaks the truth, He speaks things that are right,—things that are so. Now one does not have to “make himself believe” that which is true; for it carries its own credentials; it is its own proof. The person who does not believe what is true, is either blind or obstinate. In either case he need not try to make himself believe. His obvious course is to get his eyes open, or to get another mind, a mind that is normal, one that naturally accepts that which is reasonable.

It is evident that one ought not to try to believe a thing that is not true, and that is the only thing that one really has to try to believe. So never try to make yourself believe anything. Devote your energies to finding out what is truth, and you cannot help believing it.

9. Delightful Sweets

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

Original title: Back Page

A GREAT deal of the false and flimsy doctrine that is afloat comes not from willful perverseness, but from impatience. People are in too great a hurry to have “a fixed opinion” concerning every text of Scripture. They hear or read a text, interpret it by the sound of the words, and having once formed a theory, it is more convenient to rest upon it than to examine the foundation. This will always be the case with those to whom an appearance of knowledge is more important than actual knowledge.

But there is a better way. We cannot be in too great haste to understand every portion of the Bible; but patient plodding gets one along much faster than reckless jumping. The Bible may be likened to a vast collection of sweets,²⁴⁷ some of which are enclosed in a strong capsule, and require to be held in the mouth a long time before the outer portion dissolves so that one can enjoy the taste. Others yield sweetness as soon as they touch the tongue; yet there is none that is not richer to the taste the longer it is retained. So do not jump to a conclusion concerning that hard text, and do not skip it; but store it up in your mind, and by and by it will dissolve and delight you beyond measure with refreshing sweetness.

²⁴⁷ See *Psalms* 119:103.

10. Difficulties in the Bible

Present Truth, February 26, 1903

Original title: Back Page

THE “difficulties in the Bible” are chiefly in the minds of those who read. They have certain notions, which they are persuaded are correct, and they read the Bible for corroboration of those notions. Then comes the difficulty: for they do not find in the Bible what they have in their own heads. So they say that the language is “obscure”; for it never enters their minds that the theories they have imbibed can be erroneous, and they are sure that the Bible must substantiate them. So they proceed to “interpret” it, to make it seem to agree with them; and it must be admitted that the difficulties in the process are very great. But to one who has no thought but to find what the Bible says, the difficulties are comparatively few.

1 Corinthians 8

¹ Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

But the knowledge that puffs up is not the knowledge of God; for...

1 John 4

⁸ God is love, [and] he that loves not knows not God.

Moreover the one object that is supremely worthy of study is God, since He is the source of wisdom.

Colossians 2

³ In [Him] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Consequently it is evident that the more real wisdom and knowledge one possesses, the greater will be one’s humility. This follows because the one who sets himself to know God always has his eyes directed forward and upward, toward the infinite realms yet unexplored, and not downward and backward, toward the little portion already passed over. The better acquainted one

becomes with God, the more does one see there is yet to know, and the smaller do his own attainments appear in comparison.



11. Please Harmonize

Present Truth, May 14, 1903

THE request is frequently sent in from some earnest correspondent that some text in the Bible be “harmonized” with some other text that is mentioned. We wish to call attention to the fact, so that those who read may come to the study of the Bible better prepared to receive benefit from it.

Suppose some student of music should take one of the masterpiece of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, or Handel, and after glancing it through two or three times, should ask his teacher to “harmonize” it for him, so that he could play it understandingly. The teacher would tell the student that the harmony was already there; that the master put it there when he wrote the piece; and that he must study it until he is able to see the harmony. To the student it might at first seem a hopeless task, but if he has patience, and a love for music, he will study away at the composition, working out difficult chords, until finally the grand harmony is open to his understanding. Then he can go on for years enjoying it, his appreciation of it ever increasing; and his enjoyment of it will be the greater because of his previous study. It does not need that one should be a musician to know that there is no other way than this for a person to appreciate the work of the great composers. Why should not the Bible be treated as fairly?

David prayed to the Lord,

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The same God to whom he prayed exists today, and is as ready to answer that prayer for any person who prays it, as He was to answer it in David’s case. When the two disciples walked to Emmaus, and Jesus drew near and walked with them, their hearts burned within them, as He opened to them the Scriptures;²⁴⁸ and

²⁴⁸ *Luke 24:25-27, 32.*

afterwards, in the upper chamber, where the twelve were gathered together, Jesus opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24

⁴⁵ Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

Although we cannot see Him with our eyes, He is just as near, and just as able to instruct those who ask Him today, as He was then.

When the Scriptures were written, the harmony was put in them by the great Master.

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

One Spirit inspired the whole of the Bible, and so there is the most perfect agreement between all its parts. This agreement may not be always apparent to the casual reader, any more than the harmony in the great musical compositions is apparent at a glance; but the right kind of study will always reveal it.

The greatest hindrance to the understanding of the Scriptures is the attitude which people assume towards it. They come at it in a spirit of challenge. They put it on the defensive. When a plain declaration is read in one text, they immediately refer to another text, and say,

“I don’t see how that can be, in view of what this text says.”

So they put the two texts in antagonism. Such a position shuts off the possibility of understanding the Bible.

Hebrews 11 [RV]

³ By faith we understand.

The truths of God are revealed to faith, not to mere human intellect. There is no discount upon intellect, for it is a gift of God; but it is to be subject to faith, and to be instructed by it. That means simply that human reason is to be subject to God, for faith is the laying hold of God. Belief, implicit belief, of the Bible, is the necessary condition of understanding it. He who does not believe cannot understand; and nobody believes the Bible, when he comes to it in a spirit that will, even in thought, put one text in antagonism to another.

In order to understand the Bible we must come to it in the positive knowledge that it is inspired by God. We must know that in consequence of that inspiration it is perfectly harmonious throughout. Then when we come to a text that *seems* to be in contradiction to another, or to a line of other texts, we can say,

“I know that there is perfect harmony between these texts, although I cannot see it now. I will therefore give them careful and prayerful consideration, that I may see it.”

The problem is half solved then. The Holy Spirit was given for the express purpose of leading people into the truth,²⁴⁹ and will still do it. That Spirit is freely given to all who will sincerely ask for it.

²⁴⁹ *John* 16:13.

12. What Do You Believe?

Present Truth, July 23 & 30, 1903

Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. What Do You Believe?

Present Truth, July 23, 1903

A CORRESPONDENT has sent us, with a few introductory words, a series of fourteen questions, prefacing each with the inquiry, "Do you believe?" Before answering them in detail, we wish to say that what we or anybody else may or may not believe is a matter of no consequence to anybody except the individual believer himself; for nobody's belief of a thing makes it more worthy of credence, and unbelief by anybody in the world does not make the thing disbelieved less worthy of belief. In short, it is a waste of time either to inquire or to tell what this one or that one believes; for our faith must not be based upon some other person's faith, nor be in any way affected by it; but solely on the Word of God.

So in answering these questions we shall make no reference to what we *believe*, but tell simply what we *know* from God's Word. Of course it will be understood that we do not write anything that we do not firmly believe; but the fact that it is so, and not that we believe it, is the reason for setting it forth. We shall answer the questions in order as they come:

1. Do you believe that Christ was a God, and the Son of God, or that He was only a good man?

The Divinity of Christ

What does the Bible say of Him? and what did He say of himself?

John 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.

He was in the form of God, and equality with God was His by right.²⁵⁰ He is...

Matthew 16

¹⁶ ...the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He frequently declared that God was His Father, saying on one occasion,

John 14

⁹ He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how do you say then, Show us the Father?

The Jews charged Him with making himself God, and He did not deny it, but defended the claim.²⁵¹ Finally read what God the Father himself has called Him:

Hebrews 1

⁷ Of the angels He says, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

⁸ But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

¹⁰ And, You Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands:

¹¹ They shall perish; but You remain; and they shall all wax old as does a garment;

¹² And as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and your years shall not fail.

These words God the Father addresses to Jesus Christ. I believe all that; if anybody does not, I shall have to leave him to settle it with the Lord.

2. Do you believe that God is a personality, who interferes in human affairs?

²⁵⁰ *Philippians* 2:5-6.

²⁵¹ *John* 10:30-38.

The Personality of God

A personality certainly; but He does not “interfere” in human affairs; for human affairs are God’s own affairs, since...

Acts 17

²⁸ ...we are His offspring.

A father is not interfering when he provides for the wants of his children, and directs their actions.

How do we know that God is a personality? From the fact that we know that we ourselves are personalities; and God is our Creator. The creature is not greater than the Creator. A mere sentiment, a conception, a nonentity, cannot create a personal being. The father is greater than the child. I know that there are some people who profess not to believe in what they cannot see; yet those same people talk about the air as though it were a real thing, and even take it for granted that they have brains, although they never saw either. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in human philosophy. If God were not a personality, the language of the entire Bible would be meaningless. No language could possibly be more personal than that which is used concerning Him, and which He uses of himself.

3. Do you believe in direct answers to prayer?

Direct Answers to Prayer

Here I am glad to make a confession of faith, and say that I do. Why do I believe in them? Because I have had them. Not to believe that God gives direct, definite answers to prayer, is to disbelieve the Bible, which abounds in statements to that end, and in instances of such answers. Still, it is a thing which no one can prove to another. Whoever believes must believe for himself alone; and it is by faith that we know. Each one must...

Psalms 34

⁸ ...taste, and see that the Lord is good.

4. Do you believe that Christ performed miracles?

Miracles

Certainly; I have seen Him at work, and have experienced the result of His miracles. One of the greatest mysteries in the world is how anybody can disbelieve in miracles, when they are the commonest things in life.

Men speak of the miracle of the standing still of the sun and the moon in the days of Joshua, and the going back of the shadow on the dial ten degrees in the time of Hezekiah, as though they were impossible; but tell me how much greater a miracle either one of them was than that the heavenly bodies move at all, or that they hang in space? It is true it is most unusual for the shadow to go backwards on the dial; but the infrequency of the occurrence of a thing is not what makes it miraculous; neither does frequent repetition of an act make it less miraculous. The point lies in this:

“Can you or any other man do it? or do you know how it is done?”

An act which is beyond human power to perform is certainly miraculous. Do you believe that there are any such things?

5. Do you believe in the resurrection of the body?

The Resurrection

All these questions really amount to one, namely,

“Do you believe the Bible?”

The entire Gospel—every promise of God—rests upon the one truth of the resurrection of the dead. For example: Those who are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.²⁵² All that we can have in the world to come we get as heirs of Abraham.

²⁵² *Galatians* 3:29.

Romans 4

¹³ For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

God made this promise to Abraham,

Genesis 17

⁷ I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.

⁸ And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.

Yet,

Acts 7

⁵ He gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.

Therefore my reason for believing in the resurrection is that God must keep His promise; and Abraham and all the faithful must be raised from the dead, in order that God's word may not fail.

I believe in the resurrection of the body because I know it to be a fact. I have experienced the power of it. I know because if there were no resurrection Christ would not be risen; and I know Him too well as a living Saviour to be fooled by anybody's talk that there is no resurrection. It is no more a debatable question than is the shining of the sun.

Acts 26

⁸ Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead,

—when every day you have proof of it in the renewing of your own body?

6. Do you believe in hell as a world or place of punishment, or only as a state of mind?

Hell

What says the Scripture?

Psalm 9

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

The word “hell” is only another form of the word “hole,” and most commonly in the Bible refers to the grave, as the pit of corruption. To call it a state of mind is to play with the Scriptures, and make them of no effect. But there is another word also translated hell, and that is the name *gehenna*, from the valley of Hinnom (which is what the Hebrew word *gehenna* means) near Jerusalem, where all the refuse matter of the city was burned. There is no place of burning now, for all the wicked are in their graves unconsciously awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the Judgment. At...

2 Peter 3

⁷ ...the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men,

–the wicked will be raised to condemnation,²⁵³ when they will be consumed by the fire that will melt the earth. After that, new heavens and a new earth will appear, wherein righteousness shall dwell,²⁵⁴ and then the wicked will be...

Obadiah

¹⁶ ...as though they had not been,

–and their place will not be found.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ *John* 5:29; *Acts* 24:14-15.

²⁵⁴ *2 Peter* 3:7-13.

²⁵⁵ *Psalm* 37:10, 20, 38.

7. Do you believe in the Trinity?

The Trinity

If I knew what you meant by the term, I might tell you; but from the days of Athanasius until now all discussion about the Trinity has been an attempt to define the indefinable and the incomprehensible. Thousands have been put to death for not professing belief in a formula which even its professors could not comprehend, nor state in terms that anybody else could comprehend.

The Scriptures reveal...

Ephesians 4

⁶ One God and Father of all,

—our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and...

Hebrews 9

¹⁴ ...the eternal Spirit,

—through whom Christ offered himself and was raised from the dead; but we do not profess any knowledge of them beyond what the Scriptures give us. In teaching and preaching the Gospel we always confine ourselves strictly to Scripture terms and language; those who manufacture terms must be looked to for definitions of them. It is safest not to presume to define what the Bible has not defined, nor to attempt to explain infinity.

8. Do you believe in the Immaculate conception?

The Immaculate Conception

Let me ask you,

“Do you know what that term means?”

Very many people who use it think that it applies to the birth of Christ; but the fact is, that the Roman Catholics, who invented it,

use it with reference to Mary. Their argument is that the mother of Christ, the Sinless One, must have been conceived and born without sin. But if that were so, it would be equally necessary for her mother to be begotten sinless, and her mother, and so on back to the beginning: for a child inherits the flesh of its great, great, great grandmother as surely as that of its own mother.

No; I do not believe in the “immaculate conception” of Mary, the mother of Christ, because the Scriptures give us the genealogy of Christ, stating that:

Romans 1

³ [He] was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Christ, “the Holy One and the Just”²⁵⁶ was born of sinful flesh as an assurance to all mankind that, although sinful, God can bring forth from them...

Philippians 1

¹¹ ...the fruits of righteousness.

Christ may be found in every one of us as really as He was in the virgin Mary,²⁵⁷

Isaiah 9

⁶ For *unto us* a Child is born, *unto us* a Son is given.

9. Do you believe in a devil?

The Devil

This is the same old question,

“Do you believe the Bible?”

Read the 1st and 2nd chapters of *Job*; the 4th chapter of *Matthew*; 1 *Peter* 5:8; *Jude* 9; and dozens of other texts. I believe...

Acts 24

¹⁴ ...all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

²⁵⁶ *Acts* 3:14.

²⁵⁷ *Galatians* 4:19.

Why should I not? Besides, I have had too painful, personal evidence of the existence of a devil to doubt the fact.

10. Do you believe that the Bible contains the actual words of God, and nothing else?

The Bible – God's Word

This is what everybody ought to believe, whether I do or not; but I do:

2 Timothy 3

¹⁶ 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.

But nobody can prove to another that the Bible is the Word of God.

John 7

¹⁷ If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

1 John 5

¹⁰ He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

11. Do you believe that man has been slowly evolved from the lower forms of life? or that he was created by God in the likeness of His own image?

Evolution or Creation?

Genesis 2

⁷ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Genesis 1

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

Job 33

⁴ The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Here is the plain and the only sensible, creditable account of the origin of man. The normal human mind is so constituted by God that it cannot believe a thing without some evidence; for God always gives the most positive evidence for everything that He asks man to believe. To believe a thing without evidence is folly; and no man has ever yet brought forward the smallest particle of evidence in support of the theory of evolution. Nobody has ever seen the slightest change of any animal toward a higher state; nor does history record any trace of such a change. The theory is pure fancy, a fabrication spun out of an idle mind, in spite of the clearest evidence to the contrary. In the beginning God said:

Genesis 1

²⁴ Let the earth bring forth the living creature *after his kind*, and cattle after their kind, and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind; *and it was so*.

And so it has ever been. Not only has no animal shown any tendency toward development into a higher species, but none ever changes its kind to the slightest degree. In the forest, where animals roam wild, each kind is as distinct as at the creation. Animals as closely related as the hare and the rabbit retain their distinctive characteristics. So among birds: the robin does not mate with the sparrow, nor the sparrow with the wren. Fishes swarm in the sea in untold millions, yet the cod, the salmon, the mackerel are as distinct as though they were in different seas.

To believe that man has evolved from lower orders of creation, requires a degree of simple credulity that is not found among those who believe the Bible.

12. Do you believe in the fall of man, as related in the Bible?

Yes; I believe the whole Bible. If it were not for that, the *Present Truth* would have no reason for existence, and would cease to be published. This involves the next question, which will be given and answered with it.

13. Do you believe that Christ died to save man from hell? or do you believe that He died to save man from sin?

Salvation from Sin and Death

Both.

1 Timothy 1

¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Galatians 1

⁴ [He] gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

In saving us from sin, He saves us from death and hell, since death came by sin, and...

Psalms 9

¹⁷ ...the wicked shall be cast into hell.

And herein we have a proof that man has fallen, and is not rising by evolution from a lower state; for if man were not fallen, there would have been no need for Christ to come. If we had evolved from a monad²⁵⁸ to manhood, we would in time by the same process of evolution attain to the highest state. Because we believe the Gospel, we do not believe in evolution; and we believe the Gospel, because we find ourselves helpless,—unable to do the good thing that we would, and in need of the Saviour whom the Gospel reveals.

²⁵⁸ Monad: a single-celled organism.

14. Do you believe that only by a belief in Christ as Son of God can any man escape hell? or do you believe that only by faith in Christ can man be good?

This is answered in the preceding paragraph. Salvation is from sin; the man who is convicted of sin does not think of the fact that he is in danger of destruction, but that he has grieved the Lord; and the Christian believes and obeys the Lord, not that he may be saved from wrath, but that he may glorify God. God sent forth His Son...

Romans 8

³ ...in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We need Christ, in order that we may be proper men, real men; for only as we come to...

Ephesians 4

¹³ ...the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

—do we reach the state of...

¹³ ...a perfect man.

13. Reading and Running

Present Truth, July 30, 1903

THE prophet Habakkuk was instructed by the Lord, when a revelation was given him, to:

Habakkuk 2

² Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it.

Habakkuk prophesied of coming judgments, from which men were warned to flee. Therefore the message was to be written out very plainly, in order that men might read it and flee from the wrath to come.

But most people have misread this text, and we hear it quoted as though it read, “that he who runs may read;” and they seem to act upon this false rendering, for they for the most part content themselves with only a running glance at the Scriptures. It as though the book were opened, and men in running by took a hasty glance at its contents. They see some words, but the order of them is confused in their minds, and, indeed, they cannot be sure as to the words themselves. Then, as they pass on, some of these hasty readers give to others their imperfect ideas, and thus many things are taken for Bible truth, which are utterly foreign to the Bible.

Shall we not rather stop long enough over the Book to find out exactly what the message is? The greater and the more imminent the danger that threatens, the greater the necessity for an accurate knowledge of the warning.

14. More than a Hundred Times

Present Truth, September 17, 1903

THE late Mr. George Müller made it a rule to read his Bible through from beginning to end no less than four times annually. Altogether, according to a letter written by him to the British and Foreign Bible Society sometime ago, he had read the great Book more than a hundred times.

Besides his constant preaching in English, German, and French, he distributed over a quarter of a million of copies of the Bible, in addition to over 100,000,000 religious books and tracts.

The orphan homes at Bristol cost £115,000 to build, while the yearly maintenance required a sum of £26,000. From year to year this wonderful man kept 2,000 orphan children without knowing how he was to get the money to do it. One of his rules was never to ask a man for a penny, but he always got the money, in answer, he insisted, to his prayers. During his career, Mr. Müller fed, clothed, and educated some 125,000 orphans, at a cost of about £1,395,800.



15. Let the Word of Christ Dwell

Present Truth, October 20, 1904

Colossians 3

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

MARK the words: “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you.*” God puts it there; we are to allow it to remain there.

Deuteronomy 30

¹¹ For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off.

¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹⁴ But the word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

John 12

⁵⁰ And I know that His commandment is life eternal.



16. The People Is Grass

Present Truth, October 20, 1904

Isaiah 40

⁷ ...surely the people is grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever.

JESUS who spoke not His own words, but the Word of God, said,

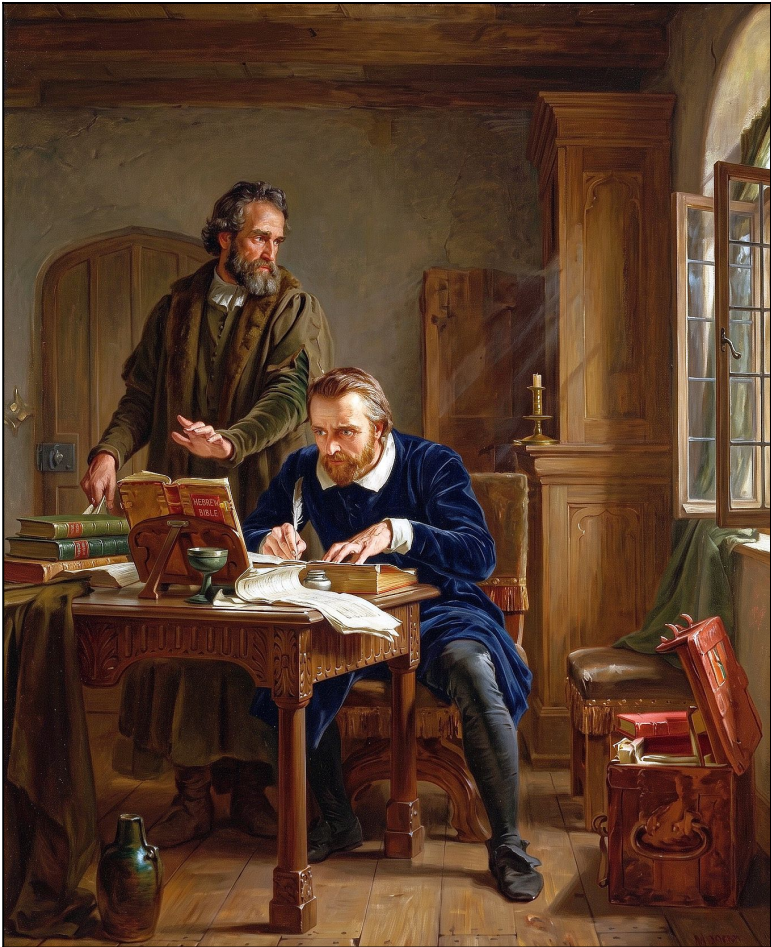
Mark 13

³¹ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away.

It cannot pass away, because God is the Word. The Word was before all things, and by it and from it all things were created; so when all visible things wither and vanish away, the Word will still remain. And he who has built upon it will be able to stand for ever. We are to be so firmly rooted and grounded in the Word that it will grow up into us, and permeate our being, creating us anew; and thus, the foundation and the superstructure being all one, we can no more be swept away than can the Rock of Ages.



Appendix



William Tyndale translating the Bible into English

1. The Modern Sermon

Present Truth, April 27, 1899

By a Minister, as quoted from *The Christian*

PP Editor's note: This article is referred to in: *Turned unto Fables*, which is article 3 in the section, 1898-1899.

DURING a recent period of rest I heard twenty sermons. They were preached by different ministers, one of whom was a student from a London college. Each sermon had been carefully prepared by the preacher. Most of them were read from manuscript. The themes were well thought out, and all were useful, interesting, and Christian. But I was greatly pained by the fact that in not more than three of these twenty sermons was there any attempt at, or any approach to, a clear statement of the Gospel way of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor was there any reference to the necessity of conversion, nor to the work of the Holy Spirit, so that if a sinner had come to listen to any or all of these seventeen sermons, desiring to know how he could be saved, he would not have been instructed.

I was one of a group of ministers a short time since. We were speaking about the present-day pulpit. One of our company said,

“How is it that there is scarcely ever any earnest pleading with sinners for conversion now? One seldom hears it.”

There was silence; all felt it was so. There is very little in the sermons we now hear to convince of sin and to lead to genuine repentance and conversion. Yet that should be the prominent aim of our sermons. I think it is William Law who says:

“Nothing can do good, or should be used by us in preaching or worship, that has not in it a redeeming virtue.”

