

Sabbath Lesson #2 – The Origin *and* Nature of the Bible – 4-10 April 2020

Christ would have us receive the word of God as did the Thessalonians. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Sunday: The Divine Revelation of the Bible – The Bible is unlike any other book because its origin is Divine. One great benefit to be derived from the study of the Bible is mentioned by Paul, when he says to Timothy, “from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make the 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. 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, it “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.” 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. All the wealth, honour, 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 “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 “wisdom that comes from above” (James 3:17) he will finally be admitted into “a better country,” where, with unclouded intellect, and the angels of God for teachers, he can in a few years learn more than his unbelieving neighbour did in a life-time, and with a whole eternity to 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 Spirit of Christ 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 of knowledge. The Bible, of all books, is the one that should be the most studied. The apostle Paul says of godliness that it “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: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a *good understanding* have all they that do His commandments.”

The Bible was not written by sinful men, but “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:19). “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. 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 (1 Peter 1:10-11). Surely, the Bible contains enough to draw out the mind of man to an unlimited extent. 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.

Monday: The Process of Inspiration – “The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Tim. 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men” (*The Great Controversy*, p 7).

Tuesday: The Written Word of God – “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Let us not forget that all “that which may be known of God is manifest in them” (Romans 1:19) – all that may be known of God, is revealed in the things that are made. For two thousand years men had no other record of God than that which is written in the leaves of the forest and on all creation. Enoch and Noah walked with God by the light which shines from the Word in nature. Even now, although the Bible has been translated into

so many languages, and circulated so widely, there are many millions of people who have never sat to study the Bible; and yet out of these tribes and peoples some will be saved (Revelation 7:), showing that all might be saved if they would, without the written Word.

This is no disparagement of the Bible; far from it! The Bible is the written Word of God, and necessary. It would not have been necessary if men had heeded the revelation of God in nature; but now that men have become blinded by the deceitfulness of sin, it is necessary that they should have something to point them to the power and Divinity of God. The Bible is thus an index, a guide-board. It does not reveal the glory, but tells men where to look to see it. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork."

Study the Bible with an earnest desire to know the will of God, that you may do it, and you will see wondrous things out of God's law. And when the Spirit of God has revealed unto you what no natural eye has seen, and no ear heard, and what has never been devised by the human heart, you will be able, with the eyes of your enlightened understanding to see the footsteps of God everywhere, and to walk and talk with Him. Then you will know that the glory of the Gospel shone as brightly before your eyes were opened to see it in creation.

Wednesday: The Parallel Between Christ and Scripture – "The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' John 1:14." (*The Great Controversy*, p 8). Jesus prayed to His Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17); and as He is the Divine Word He also said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). The Bible leads us to Christ. The Jews searched the scripture for sanctification, ignoring Christ and killing Him to retain their written word. But Jesus said to them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). He who truly knows Christ knows the truth, and so can tell the truth, for the truth is the very life of Christ in the believer. God sanctifies us through Christ. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). God gives everything in Christ. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Thursday: Understanding the Bible in Faith – In Romans 1:17 Paul says: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The work of righteousness we read about in the Bible must be manifested in our lives. But this is wholly a work of faith, – the righteousness of God is revealed from "faith to faith," – faith in the beginning, and faith to the end, – as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

There are too many who try to live the Christian life on the strength of the faith which they exercised when they realised their need of pardon for the sins of their past life. They know that God alone can pardon sins, and that He does this through Christ; but they imagine that having once been started they must run the race in their own strength. If they ever have anything to say, they tell only of a past experience, of the joy they had when they first believed. Of the joy of living for God, and of walking with Him by faith, they know nothing, and he who tells of it speaks a strange language to them. But the apostle carries this matter of faith clear through to the glorious kingdom, in the following most forcible illustration:

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:5-6).

Enoch was translated because he walked with God, and had the testimony that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please God. That is enough to prove the point. Without faith not an act can be performed that will meet the approval of God. Without faith the best deeds that a man can do will come infinitely short of the perfect righteousness of God, which is the only standard. Wherever real faith is found it is a good thing; but the best of faith in God to take away the load of the sins of the past will profit a person nothing unless it is carried right through in ever-increasing measure until the close of his probation.