

1. The Voice from Heaven

Biblical material: Gen. 3:8, 9; 2 Sam. 12:1-7; Isa. 59:2; Jer. 38:14-19; Ezekiel 4; Amos 3:7; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21; 3:1..

Quotes

- There's a Bible on the shelf there. But I keep it next to Voltaire—poison and antidote. *Bertrand Russell*
- Theologians always try to turn the Bible into a book without common sense. *Georg C. Lichtenberg*
- Scriptures, n. The sacred books of our holy religion, as distinguished from the false and profane writings on which all other faiths are based. *Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary*

Questions

How does God communicate with us? How do we know we're not just "hearing things"? On what basis do we decide whether God is speaking? In what way is the Bible a means God uses to communicate? What went wrong in the God-human relationship to make communication so difficult? Why should we "search the Scriptures," and what are the dangers even here?

Discussion/Comment

When it comes to reading the Bible, we all bring many presuppositions to the book. It is virtually impossible to examine it on its own merits, because it has come to mean so many different things to different people. But only as we allow the Bible to speak for itself will this quarter's studies be meaningful.

Someone called the bible the world's least-read best-seller. It is viewed as a good book, but few examine why and how. It may be viewed as literature, and read that way. Some want to turn it into a code book. Others dismiss it altogether as the ramblings of ancient men.

So how are we, who already accept the Bible, able to share the good news with those for whom the Bible is not a trusted authority? How is it possible to convey the idea that this is the word of God without becoming pretentiously pious or sounding weird? How can we use the Bible with those who do not accept it as valid at all?

Some practice what we might call "bibliomancy." This is flipping through the Bible and randomly pointing at a text to determine one's fate, rather like astrology. Others take the words, and apply them literally and directly to their situation, without regard to their original intent. That's rather like reading someone else's mail and believing it's all about you! Still others claim to read the Bible as today's newspaper, applying every aspect to current events.

So how to study the Bible, and how to understand this communication from God? We certainly believe, but how can we best understand, and how can we best share our convictions? That's the theme of this quarter's studies.

While the Bible is a wonderful record of divine-human communication, sometimes we do not hear or understand too well. That's why Jesus came. As the lesson quarterly observes, (Tuesday's lesson): "the coming of Jesus faithfully revealed the true character of God the Father.... Based on from John 14:8-12 we know that those who have seen Him have seen the Father, because Jesus and the Father are 'in' each other. Their intimate relationship is much more than that of a master and a disciple."

So while we value every word of Scripture, we must see the Bible in the context of the coming of Jesus to reveal God to us. As Jesus himself said, to committed Bible students, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.” John 5:39 NIV.

Text comments

Genesis 3:8, 9. Why did Adam and Eve hide from their heavenly Father? They certainly did not want communication with him then. God is the one searching calling, “Where are you?”

2 Samuel 12:1-7. The story of Nathan the prophet confronting David is a wonderful illustration of communicating hard subjects. An illustration of how to portray God and his word?

Isaiah 59:2. How is it that God does not hear us? What does sin do to our communication with God? How does God resolve this problem and restore the relationship?

Jeremiah 38:14-19. Jeremiah relays God’s command to king Zedekiah, though he knows this is not what the king wants to hear. How does this apply to us today?

Ezekiel 4. In this acted prophecy, God is trying to get his message across to a disinterested people. Any lessons here? And what about the great controversy?

Amos 3:7. Is it really true that God does nothing without revealing his plans to his prophets? What are we supposed to derive from this? Prophets as God’s spokesmen...

2 Timothy 3:16. Does this really mean *all* scripture? It is also a challenge to use this internal self-confirmation to those who have not yet been convinced.

2 Peter 1:20, 21; 3:1. Clearly scripture is not produced by the prophet’s own intent. The source of inspiration is from God. And as Peter goes on to say, the message is to stimulate us to wholesome thinking—certainly not a obey or else message!

Ellen White Comments

Says the Saviour, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.” You will have a conflict to be right. I don’t command you to read the Bible--I never shall. I want you to read the Bible because you love it, not because you are driven to it, for then it will be an unpleasant task. But if you neglect the reading of the Bible, you will lose your love for it. Those who love the word of God are those who read it most. By reading and searching out scripture references, you will see the chain of truth, and will see new beauties in the word of God. While you make the Scriptures more your study, and become more familiar with them, you will be better fortified against the temptations of Satan. When inclined to speak, or act, wrong, some scripture will come to arrest you, and turn you right. It is not natural for the heart to love the Bible; but when it is renewed by grace, then the mind will feast upon the rich truths and promises contained in the word of God. {AY 79-80}

Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God’s word. {COL 112.3}

2. The Final Word

Biblical material: Matt. 4:4-10; 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Gal. 1:11, 12; James 2; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 3:16.

Quotes:

- The Good Book—one of the most remarkable euphemisms ever coined. *Ashley Montagu*
- If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today. *Mahatma Gandhi*
- It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand. *Mark Twain*
- The faith will totter if the authority of the Holy Scriptures loses its hold on men. We must surrender ourselves to the authority of the Holy Scripture, for it can neither mislead nor be misled. *Augustine*

Questions

In what way is the Bible “the final word”? How does the assertion that the Bible is “God-breathed” sound to modern ears? How do we explain the concept of inspiration? What was the process through which the Bible came into being? Can we trust the different translations? In what way is the Bible authoritative? How do we share our ideas about the Bible with others?

Discussion/ Comment

As the lesson makes clear, Jesus validates Scripture. And yet Scripture also validates Jesus. What is going on here? While this mutual validation is undeniable, we have to step back and ask ourselves how all this is true. We are not told to believe in the Bible or in Jesus without examining the evidence. In fact we do well to examine all the evidence so that we can be sure it makes sense and is consistent.

If the Bible is God's final word, as the title for this week's study suggests, does this mean that God no longer speaks? Or is it final in the sense of being the ultimate authority? In which case, does this mean that nothing in the Bible should be investigated, that everything should be accepted on the basis of unquestioned authority?

That God still speaks to us, and in many ways, is surely true. And it is the same God of the Bible who invites us to reason together with him. He gives us the Bible to read and understand, which means we are meant to use our minds. We need to do all in our power to gain the correct understanding, and not read causally and trivially, assuming that what the Bible writer set down in his time is always obvious to us today. The language of the Bible is human language, with all its deficiencies, so we do well to pay close attention to what is actually being said. Only then can we derive God's word for us today.

The question of inspiration is often misunderstood, and can lead to many mistaken ideas. The concept that the Bible was given by dictation from God is not endorsed by the Biblical evidence. Nor is the idea that the Bible is infallible in its human aspects—like the sun “standing still” and so on, based on old ideas of astronomy. Human writers write using their own human language, and try best to communicate God's ideas. The Holy Spirit guides, so that there is no error in delivery of spiritual issues. But there is an advancing of truth, and deepening of understanding, a growing in meaning. Especially is this true as we compare the New with the Old Testament. We do not say that previous writings are deficient, rather that each writer wrote

only that which he could understand. With the coming of Jesus, things become so much plainer, wider, deeper, so that we are the most fortunate, living with the benefit of the accumulated explanations of so many of God's penmen.

Text comments

Matt. 4:4-10; 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56. Jesus' Biblical response to temptations is an example for us; he also makes it clear that there can be no debate on the good intentions of God. Replying to the chief priests and elders, Jesus also quoted Scripture that they should have known. His reference to the fulfillment of Scripture also demonstrate how seriously he took it, and how he saw himself as fulfilling God's promises.

Gal. 1:11, 12. Paul identifies his message as not made up, but directly from Jesus.

James 2. James shows how the Old Testament applies in New Testament times

2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:16. Prophecy comes from God, says Peter, not from prophets.

Ellen White Comments

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21}

At Berea Paul found Jews who were willing to investigate the truths he taught. Luke's record declares of them: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

The minds of the Bereans were not narrowed by prejudice. They were willing to investigate the truthfulness of the doctrines preached by the apostles. They studied the Bible, not from curiosity, but in order that they might learn what had been written concerning the promised Messiah. Daily they searched the inspired records, and as they compared scripture with scripture, heavenly angels were beside them, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts.

Wherever the truths of the gospel are proclaimed, those who honestly desire to do right are led to a diligent searching of the Scriptures. If, in the closing scenes of this earth's history, those to whom testing truths are proclaimed would follow the example of the Bereans, searching the Scriptures daily, and comparing with God's word the messages brought them, there would today be a large number loyal to the precepts of God's law, where now there are comparatively few. But when unpopular Bible truths are presented, many refuse to make this investigation. Though unable to controvert the plain teachings of Scripture, they yet manifest the utmost reluctance to study the evidences offered. Some assume that even if these doctrines are indeed true, it matters little whether or not they accept the new light, and they cling to pleasing fables which the enemy uses to lead souls astray. Thus their minds are blinded by error, and they become separated from heaven. {AA 231-2}

3. Bible Prophecy Fulfilled

Biblical material: Isa. 52:13-53:12, Daniel 2, Matt. 24:24, John 13:19.

Quotes

- The people who were honored in the Bible were the false prophets. It was the ones we call the prophets who were jailed and driven into the desert, and so on. *Noam Chomsky*
- Prophesying is a dangerous business for those who are not inspired. *R.L. Dabney*
- I know that some are always studying the meaning of the fourth toe of the right foot of some beast in prophecy and have never used either foot to go and bring men to Christ. *Vance Havner*
- The truth of scripture demolishes speculation. *R.C. Sproul*

Questions

What is prophecy “for”? While we can gain confidence in God over the fulfillment of prophecy, is this the only aspect to look at here? What about issues of goodness, right, and truth? Does fulfilled prophecy convince everyone? How does Daniel 2 play out in our post-modern world? Do the prophecies prove Jesus, or does Jesus prove the prophecies?

Discussion/ Comment

God “makes the end known from the beginning.” Why is this—what is it for? Surely it is not simply to satisfy our curiosity as to what lies ahead, rather it is to confirm that despite the apparent success of evil and the problems of sin and the seeming randomness of life, God still exercises control over his universe and will bring it back into harmony once more. In the context of this quarter’s studies, such prophetic perspectives also endorse the validity and trustworthiness of Scripture.

The difference between prophecies in the Bible and predictions of today is that prophecies center on the plans and purposes of God, not on the impacts of wayward comets or Martian invasions! They are not so much about the future, but about God’s involvement in human events. In this way we once again see the great controversy unfolding, the revelation of the issues behind the cosmic conflict.

“Jesus showed us that prophecy is not just about being able to tell the future. Instead, prophecy is given to strengthen our faith in God and His Word *after* the events have occurred. The more we see the fulfillment of the prophecy, the more we believe that the Bible really comes from the Lord.” (Sunday’s lesson). There’s no question that prophecy is part of the evidence. But in another sense, the greater emphasis should be on the nature and character of this prophecy-fulfilling God. For even if prophecy is true, no one would want a relationship with a God who is as the Devil describes him. Consequently we have to look not only at the events, but at reasons and consequences. God is always working for good, yet in this world of sin tragic and problematic things happen. That’s another thing we need to learn from history—that sin is very corrosive to God’s kingdom and methods, that the innocent suffer with the guilty, and that God is affected too.

The issue is truly a question of trust. Not only whether God can be trusted to fulfill prophecy, but whether he can be trusted to run the universe wisely and well, and whether we will be comfortable and happy in his presence. Most importantly, do we trust God enough to give ourselves to him, so that he may repair the damage done by sin, to heal us from the disease of

evil, to remake us into his divine image once more? Only then can we say we truly trust this trustworthy God.

Future prophecy—particularly regarding the end and the second coming—is also part of the Biblical prophetic message. If past prophecy has been fulfilled, then future prophecy can be considered reliable. However what of the prophecies in the Old Testament that were not fulfilled—for example the promises to Israel that were contingent on their positive response? The fact that they went their own way meant that God’s promises were not applicable—does this mean that prophecies failed?

Text comments

Isaiah 52:13-53:12. The prophecy about the suffering servant is given to encourage us (52:12, 13), but also to tell us more about God. Some of Isaiah 53 is hard to understand, and we need to be careful that in speaking well of Jesus we do not speak ill of the Father

Daniel 2. The traditional starting point for many evangelistic campaigns. Does this approach still work as well? While it is a very convincing prophecy, many are not persuaded. Why? How do we best express our confidence in God through such prophetic presentations?

Matthew 24:24. What is deceptive about false Christs and false prophets? In terms of prophecy, this reminds us that we need to exercise judgment in whom we trust.

John 13:19. Jesus’ clear reason for explaining events beforehand is so that his disciples might believe. It is this aspect of belief in a caring, concerned God that is at the heart of understanding the reason and purpose of prophecy.

Ellen White Comments

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of “the Watcher and the Holy One.” Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world’s great empires--Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another. While the nations rejected God’s principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements. {Ed 176-7}

No one is to understand from this scripture that God arbitrarily blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of the Jews. It was Christ’s work to soften hard hearts. But if men resisted the work of Christ, the sure result would be that their hearts would become hardened.

Christ quoted a prophecy which more than a thousand years before had predicted what God’s foreknowledge had seen would be. The prophecies do not shape the characters of the men who fulfill them. Men act out their own free will, either in accordance with a character placed under the molding of God or a character placed under the harsh rule of Satan. {RH, November 13, 1900}

But we have not been deceived. Notwithstanding the apparent triumph of Satan on the earth, Christ is carrying forward his work in the heavenly sanctuary. The word of God portrays the wickedness and corruption that should exist in the world in the last days. As we see the fulfilment of the prophecy, our faith in the final triumph of Christ’s kingdom should be increased. We should go forth with courage to do our appointed work. {RH, May 3, 1906}

4. The Bible is Reliable

Biblical material: Matt. 5:17, 18; 24:35; John 10:34, 35; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:6, 12-19; Gal. 3:22; 2 Tim. 3:16; James 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:25.

Quotes

- There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than the Bible itself. *Dwight L. Moody*
- The scripture in times of disputes is like an open town in times of war, which serves in differently the occasions of both parties. *Alexander Pope*
- No man ever believes that the Bible means what it says; he is always convinced that it says what he means. *George Bernard Shaw*
- The Word of God is either absolute or obsolete. *Vance Havner*

Questions

Is it not circular logic to try and prove the Bible from the Bible? Can the Bible be trusted—and how is this demonstrated? How do we establish the truth of the Bible? Are we reliant on external evidence? What is the most persuasive aspects of the Bible? How do we explain the issues in the great controversy when the Bible does not give us much detail?

Discussion

As Jesus prayed near the end of his life, he asked the Father on behalf of his disciples, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” John 17:17 NIV. What did he mean? Clearly he would have included what we now call the Old Testament—but in speaking of God's word he meant much more than that. As John explains, Jesus himself is the Word, the Word that is with God and was God. So the concept of Word is far more than we usually give to the word “word”! It encompasses the meaning and purpose of God himself. In the context of the great controversy, this relates especially to God's truthfulness and trustworthiness as he answers the Accuser's challenges that he is hostile, unforgiving, severe etc.

The reliability of the Bible is best determined not by assertion, but through demonstration and evidence. Indeed, this is really the only way of appeal today. Few are willing to accept assertions based on authority. Most wish to examine and question, which is what God invites. In fact he insists on us doing so, for blind obedience is unacceptable. So we need to test the Scriptures, test the Spirits, even test the very nature and character of God by examining the evidence, including that in our own lives and experience.

Comment

“Without the Bible we would know nothing about this great controversy over the character and government of God. Nor would we know about His infinitely skillful and gracious handling of this conflict - this crisis of distrust in His family. But we have been assuming all along that the Bible can be trusted and there are legitimate questions that can be raised, and have indeed been raised, through the years: How do we know that we have the right collection of 66 books? How do we know that the words of those books have been accurately transmitted through the ages? And how do we know that they have been adequately translated i.e., can you trust the versions of the Bible? And most important of all can we have any confidence in our

interpretation of these books and these words? When we have read it through can we say I really have seen dependable evidence about my God?...

“As Hebrews 1:1 (KJV) says, ‘In many and various ways God has spoken to us through the years. . .’ And in many and various ways those words have been translated - into English and most of the other languages on this earth. How else could the gospel go to all the world? How could people find out about our God? And so my recommendation would be: take the Bible, or preferably the versions, plural, of your choice, and let’s sit down together, and take up the fourth question in our next lesson. Having these magnificent opportunities - never has the Bible been so readily available - and having all this evidence so readily available, lets read it. Can we confidently come to the conclusion that we understand the meaning; that the evidence is really there, the Bible can be trusted? Some of us, who have spent a lot of time reading these versions, believe that the Author who is behind the Bible can be trusted because there is trustworthy evidence in the record.” *A. Graham Maxwell, Conversations About God #5.*

Text comments

Matthew 5:17, 18. Jesus makes it clear he is abolishing nothing of the Old Testament’s primary message, but he himself is the fulfillment of God’s word previously given. Of course, when the fulfillment has come, there is no longer any need for those things that prefigure—e.g. sacrifices.

Matthew 24:35. Jesus states his words will never pass away—the values and principles of God and his government are as eternal as God himself.

John 10:34, 35. An interesting statement by Jesus. Once again he is establishing the continuing perspective of God’s previous witness, especially as it applies to himself.

Romans 8:34. God is always working for us, (and let’s not split the Trinity!)

1 Corinthians 15:6, 12-19. The witness to the resurrection is the ground of our faith.

Galatians 3:22. Paul references back to the OT to make his point about redemption.

2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is inspired, and *useful*—all of it, not just the parts we happen to prefer. This encourages us to examine all the evidence and understand it.

James 2:23. James points back to Abraham, and his trust in God as his friend. This is the reason for Abraham’s assurance of salvation—in the God he knows and trusts.

1 Peter 1:25. Peter, quoting the OT, affirms the enduring qualities of God’s word. So will there be Bibles in heaven, in case we need to be reminded?

Ellen White Comments

There will be false dreams and false visions, which have some truth, but lead away from the original faith. The Lord has given men a rule by which to detect them: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8: 20). If they belittle the law of God, if they pay no heed to His will as revealed in the testimonies of His Spirit, they are deceivers. They are controlled by impulse and impressions, which they believe to be from the Holy Spirit, and consider more reliable than the Inspired Word. They claim that every thought and feeling is an impression of the Spirit; and when they are reasoned with out of the Scriptures, they declare that they have something more reliable. But while they think that they are led by the Spirit of God, they are in reality following an imagination wrought upon by Satan.--Bible Echo, September, 1886. {2SM 98-99}

5. When the Rocks Cry Out

Biblical material: Isa. 20:1, Nah. 3:2-7, Luke 19:40, Heb. 11:24-27, John 20:24-31.

Quotes

- No one ever became, or can become truly eloquent without being a reader of the Bible, and an admirer of the purity and sublimity of its language. *Fisher Ames*
- Blame none but yourself if all the Bible you get is that little bit from under the calendar hurriedly snatched as a sop to conscience. *David Shepherd*
- If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, he will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them. *George Muller*
- Do not try to make the Bible relevant; its relevance is axiomatic. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Questions

Is it important to have archaeological support for the Bible? If there are contradictions between Biblical scholars and archaeologists, who wins? What kind of evidence is conclusive? How should we approach the concept of developing truth, and hypotheses and theories? What are truly fundamental and incontrovertible beliefs? How do the “rocks cry out”?

Discussion

“However nice to have these quotes and others, we mustn’t base our faith on archaeology, because, like all disciplines, it is still a human endeavor.” Sunday’s lesson. So does that mean that we have to “have faith” in spite of the evidence? Recognizing the truth of interpretation and subjectivity, we still need to examine the physical evidence. But like many other areas of human knowledge, archaeological “truths” change depending on further discoveries and better interpretations. Similarly our understanding of cultural and historical aspects of Scripture changes as we learn more about these ancient societies. But these increasing insights rarely affect fundamental beliefs...

The good news is that even if inconsistencies remain between the Bible and archaeology, recent discoveries have helped clarify the picture, and this would be expected to continue. We should expect congruency between the Bible and external evidence, while not making any one aspect determinative.

While it is a truism that “Dead Men Do Tell Tales,” as we have often affirmed in evangelistic meetings with a focus on archaeology, the greater emphasis surely must focus on the kind of God who is behind the Bible. In this post-modern world, “proofs” are less important than a demonstration of the character of God, and the relationship he wants with each one of us.

Comment

What—No Hittites? So often the Bible is accused of being mistaken—in its facts, and in its conclusions. Take one example from the recent past. High-brow scholars read the Bible and found mention of a nation nobody had ever heard of. The Hittites. And with the arrogance of modernity the scholars said: “We know nothing of a nation called the Hittites. They are never mentioned by classical historians. This proves the Bible is untrue. It cannot be trusted—at least not as a historical record.”

Then some unknown inscriptions were found in Asia Minor, and in 1906 archaeologists discovered that the city they were excavating at Boghazkoy in Turkey was the ancient capital of the Hittite empire.

The Spade confirms the Book! Here was an unknown empire whose only mention came from the Bible. The Hittites—their very existence—had been forgotten by everybody else. Now here they were! What a knock-back for the critics when they were faced with hard evidence of the real existence of a vast Hittite empire...

Many of the other supposed “historical mistakes” of the Bible have also been disproved. The Bible is an accurate historical document. As Werner Keller, author of the best-selling *The Bible as History* said: “In view of the overwhelming mass of authentic and well-attested evidence now available...there kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: ‘The Bible is right after all!’ *Jonathan Gallagher, article “Can we trust the Bible?”*”

Text comments

Isaiah 20:1. A clear historical reference that is can be related to external sources.

Nahum 3:2-7. Nineveh is mentioned by name, and the allusions are accurate.

Luke 19:40. What is the context of Jesus’ statement? His comment is made in response to the Pharisees, who want to keep things quiet. The witness is so compelling, he says...

Heb. 11:24-27. This historical review indicates an accurate perspective of times long ago.

John 20:24-31. What kind of proof really convinces? Ultimately it is personal experience together with clear evidence that wins us over. God’s character must be seen and vindicated.

Ellen White Comments

We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the word of God ourselves. If we allow others to do our thinking, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities. The noble powers of the mind may be so dwarfed by lack of exercise on themes worthy of their concentration as to lose their ability to grasp the deep meaning of the word of God. The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual...

But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through, and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind, and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets, you may read a passage, and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life. {CE 58-9}