

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2020: *How to Interpret Scripture*
Lesson 4 “The Bible—The Authoritative Source of Our Theology”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 7:1–13; Rom. 2:4; 1 John 2:15–17; 2 Cor. 10:5, 6; John 5:46, 47; John 7:38.

Memory Text

“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Tradition
- III. Experience
- IV. Culture
- V. Reason
- VI. The Bible
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What are some other potential sources of authority beyond the Bible? How does Isaiah 8:20 characterize other sources of authority? Does that mean we should not pay attention to science, history, experience, culture, or tradition and simply read the Bible as a guide in all things? What did the Reformers really mean by “Scripture alone”? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What does Mark 7:1-13 teach us about how Jesus related to the traditions of His day? How do we distinguish between the Word of God and human tradition? Read 1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6. How do you deal with the Scriptural reality that tradition is positive in the Pauline texts and negative for Jesus? What are some things we are comfortable with today that could be placed under the label “tradition”? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Romans 2:4 and Titus 3:4-5. How do we experience the goodness, kindness and love of God? At the same time, how can our personal experience come to conflict with the Bible? What warning is found in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3? What does

this tell us about the limits of experience as a clue to God's will in any given situation? How can we go about testing our experience by the Word of God? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read 1 John 2:15-17. What does John mean when he says that we should not love the things of the world? How can we live in the world and yet not have a worldly mindset? Are there aspects of accepted culture in today's world that are in complete opposition to biblical faith? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10. Why is obedience to Christ in our thoughts so important? What does it mean that the "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of wisdom? What evidence is there for the sinfulness of humanity? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read John 5:46-47 and 7:38. For Jesus Christ, what is the ultimate source for understanding spiritual questions? How does the Bible confirm that Jesus is the true Messiah? Why is the Bible a safer guide in spiritual questions than subjective impressions? If private revelations were the final word in spiritual questions, what would be the result? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Why is it often easier to uphold details of one's tradition than to live by the spirit of what the Bible teaches? What role should tradition play in the Adventist Church? What are some of the positives and negatives in various religious traditions? (Friday's lesson)
8. What is the role of contemporary culture in the way we process our own faith? What are some positives in that culture and what should we beware of? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But when Jesus came, he found a group of people who were totally preoccupied with God's laws and with obedience to their every detail. He never had to tell them not to make a graven image. They had learned their lesson in the discipline of Babylonian captivity, and they never sank into ordinary idolatry again. He never had to tell them which day was the Sabbath. They regarded it as their highest duty to obey all ten of the Ten Commandments. He never had to urge them to pay tithe. Matthew records they used to tithe even the tiniest things: the seeds of the mint, anise, and cumin. Nor did Jesus have to tell them they should obey the laws of hygiene. He commented on the fact that they would even strain gnats out of their goat's milk lest they should eat a forbidden insect. Nor did he ever have to tell them to search the scriptures. He said they did it all the time—though they did it for the wrong reason. (John 5:39) Nor did he ever have to tell them to be careful in their association with unbelievers. In fact, when they came in from the market place, they used to wash themselves in certain special,

ceremonial ways, lest they be contaminated by association with the Gentiles. You see, they all could say, like the rich young ruler, “All these things we have obeyed from our youth up.”

You would think that in the face of such rigorous obedience and willingness to do precisely what they were told—you would think Jesus would be pleased, and they would recognize and welcome him when he came. But all heaven watched the incredible scene of those who claimed to love God’s law, denouncing the Lawgiver as a lawbreaker. It must have puzzled the angels a great deal. So Jesus ventured to suggest that while they were working so hard to obey, that actually they were obeying for the wrong reason. Because they were obeying for the wrong reason, they really were not obeying at all. You can imagine how offensive this was to them. In fact, he went further and suggested that if only they knew the God who had given the law, they would keep the law for an entirely different reason—a reason that would make it possible for them to be obedient and free at the same time.

The Old Testament prophets had dealt with this, centuries before. Just to mention two, you will remember Amos and Isaiah had chided the people for their very reluctant Sabbath keeping. Amos records, “Oh, when will the Sabbath be past that we may buy and sell and get gain?” Isaiah deplores their mechanical unthinking obedience, particularly on the Sabbath. Jesus quoted those words of Isaiah and commended him for telling the truth. Look at Isaiah 29:13: “The Lord said, ‘These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless and their hearts are somewhere else. Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.’” (GNB)

Or, as one translation has it: “Their worship of me is but the commandments of men learned by rote.” And rote, unthinking worship is such an insult to our intelligent God. Then Jesus set out to tell the truth about his Father and the kind of obedience that is really pleasing to him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1, “God’s Law Is No Threat To Our Freedom” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

God says, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people [that’s what I offered Israel first, that’s what I really prefer]. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD.” You see, there is no way one can have this experience without knowing God. Isn’t it because they didn’t know God, that when he raised his voice on Sinai, they said to Moses, “Don’t let God speak to us, lest we die’? And he said, “You don’t know God. There is no need to be afraid.” And they said, “That isn’t what we see and hear. You be our mediator. You be our intercessor. We want someone in between.” “Alright,” says God, “you may have someone in between.” {Graham

Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus, recorded October, 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

We do speak out of our experience, even when we speak under inspiration. God works through human beings in the setting in which they are living. Why was John able to say some of the things he did? Wasn't it that he had a special relationship with Christ? So he emphasizes the things that seem very important to him. And Matthew to him; and Luke to him. That's the way it works, isn't it? Maybe Solomon would have given us a much more ringing conclusion with more explanations than he does; but because of all the wasted years, he wasn't able to say as much as much as he might have been able to, maybe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, recorded January, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/31MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/32MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: Alright. Now here's another one. "If a person is sincere about religious things but sincerely wrong, whose fault is that?" And I suppose implicit behind the question is, "What will happen as a result? Will the person be punished or suffer consequences from that?"

Graham: Yes, I like that question and what it implies. It needs to be understood, or that would seem rather forbidding. I do believe that if one sincerely takes the wrong path, one will sincerely arrive at the wrong destination. That's true.

Lou: So whose fault is it then?

Graham: It's just that if we really are sincere; if we're really willing to listen, God has not left us in the dark. As John says, Christ is the light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world. And Paul says in Romans that there are Gentiles who know nothing about the Bible, who know nothing about God's law and instructions. But they do by nature the things that the law requires, and they show that the law has been written on their hearts. And I love the paragraph that is familiar to us both, that says even among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly; those to whom the message was never brought by human instrumentality, but they've heard the voice of God speaking to them in nature. And they've done the things that the law requires, which is love. And they're recognized as God's children. Anybody on this

planet who is sincerely and humbly willing to listen; God is not going to abandon that person, and leave him in the dark. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2 with Lou Venden, “What Went Wrong In God’s Universe?” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>*

Remember he also says, “Who requires you to trample my courts?” They came, and Amos says they sang a lot. “They honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.” The heart is where a man does his thinking, his best thinking! Amos continues, “And their fear of me”, and that is their reverence, their worship of me, “is but a commandment of men learned by rote.” Unthinking, mechanical worship is an utter insult to our intelligent, gracious God. And it doesn’t do us any good! It destroys us to simply do these things because we’re supposed to. And if we Adventists, when we’re asked why we do something or don’t do it—if all we can say is, “Well, because God said so, and I believe it, and that’s all there is to it,” that’s something learned by rote. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Isaiah, recorded January, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father’s house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness “came to himself.” The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father.” Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father’s love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God’s love that constrains the sinner to return to God. “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” Romans 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3. {COL 202.1}

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen

and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

The grace of Christ is not confined to a few. The message of mercy and forgiveness brought from heaven by Christ was to be heard by all. Our Saviour says, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12). His blessings are universal, reaching to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. Christ came to break down every wall of partition ... that every soul, whether Jew or Gentile, might be a free worshiper and have access to God.... {TMK 98.2}

Through varied channels the heavenly messengers are in active communication with every part of the world, and when man calls upon the Lord with a true and earnest heart, God is represented as bending from His throne above. He listens to every yearning cry, and answers, "Here am I." He raises up the distressed and oppressed. He bestows His blessings on the evil as well as on the good. {TMK 98.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger. {SD 160.3}

He who has given His precious life because He loved you, and wanted you to be happy, will be a Captain who will always be mindful of your interest. {SD 160.4}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures. —*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

As we try to become acquainted with our Heavenly Father through His word, angels will come near, our minds will be strengthened, our character will be elevated and refined, and we shall become more like our Saviour. And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our

affections go out after God; while the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things. {FE 443.1}

It is the will of God that each professing Christian shall perfect a character after the divine similitude. By studying the character of Christ revealed in the Bible, by practicing His virtues, the believer will be changed into the same likeness of goodness and mercy. {CT 249.1}

Men are changed in accordance with what they contemplate. If commonplace thoughts and affairs take up the attention, the man will be commonplace. If he is too negligent to obtain anything but a superficial understanding of truth, he will not receive the rich blessings that God would be pleased to bestow upon him. It is the law of the mind that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. The mental powers will surely become contracted and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible to one another, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. The richest treasures of thought are waiting for the diligent student. {CT 460.3}

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

The Author of this spiritual life is unseen, and the exact method by which that life is imparted and sustained, it is beyond the power of human philosophy to explain. Yet the operations of the Spirit are always in harmony with the written word. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world. The natural life is preserved moment by moment by divine power; yet it is not sustained by a direct miracle, but through the use of blessings placed within our reach. So the spiritual life is sustained by the use of those means that Providence has supplied. {AA 284.2}

So it is with the true child of God. The religion of Christ reveals itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. When the heart is opened to the heavenly influence of truth and love, these principles will flow forth again like streams in the desert, causing fruitfulness to appear where now are barrenness and dearth. {PK 234.1}

The religion of Christ never degrades the receiver; it never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hardhearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, bringing them into captivity to

Christ. God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. He has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. {8T 63.3}

As the mind dwells upon Christ, the character is molded after the divine similitude. The thoughts are pervaded with a sense of His goodness, His love. We contemplate His character, and thus He is in all our thoughts. His love encloses us. If we gaze even a moment upon the sun in its meridian glory, when we turn away our eyes, the image of the sun will appear in everything upon which we look. Thus it is when we behold Jesus; everything we look upon reflects His image, the Sun of Righteousness. We cannot see anything else, or talk of anything else. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul and affects every portion of our daily life, softening and subduing our whole nature. By beholding, we are conformed to the divine similitude, even the likeness of Christ. To all with whom we associate we reflect the bright and cheerful beams of His righteousness. We have become transformed in character; for heart, soul, mind, are irradiated by the reflection of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Here again there is the realization of a personal, living influence dwelling in our hearts by faith. {TM 388.2}

God takes men as they are and educates them for His service if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like his master in character. He has clearer, broader views. His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. So quickened is he by the life-giving power of the Sun of righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.—GW 285, 286 (1915). {1MCP 11.1}

The religion of Christ in the heart is the wellspring of life. It is the living water that Christ will give to every thirsting soul that asks Him. {TMK 143.3}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He "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. {CH 222.1}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds

subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. . . . The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers. {PP 596.2}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. {TM 109.4}

Here is a test which all may apply if they will. None need be left in uncertainty and doubt. There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith. But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith. {ST, December 30, 1886 par. 6}

Every individual soul has a responsibility before God, and is not to be arbitrarily instructed by men as to what he shall do, what he shall say, and where he shall go. We are not to put confidence in the counsel of men and assent to all they shall say unless we have evidence that they are under the influence of the Spirit of God. {RH, July 1, 1909 par. 4}

Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer. {2T 130.1}

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God's Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. {2SM 43.2}

It is through the Word—not feeling, not excitement—that we want to influence the people to obey the truth. On the platform of God's Word we can stand with safety. The living Word is replete with evidence, and a wonderful power accompanies its proclamation in our world. {3SM 375.7}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

The truths of the Word of God are not mere sentiment, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin have clouded the understanding, is removed. {RH, November 10, 1904 par. 4}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. Ignorance of God's word is sin, when every provision has been made that we may become wise. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. {4SP 416.2}

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend.

He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

The Holy Spirit is present with the earnest searcher. Its illumination shines upon the Word, stamping the truth upon the mind with a new, fresh importance. The searcher is filled with a sense of peace and joy never before felt. The preciousness of truth is realized as never before. A new, heavenly light shines upon the Word, illuminating it as though every letter were tinged with gold. God Himself has spoken to the mind and heart, making the Word spirit and life. {2SM 39.1}

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can do. It is the best mental as well as spiritual exercise for the human mind. {5T 703.3}

God has given in His word sufficient evidence of its divine character. The great truths which concern our redemption are clearly presented. By the aid of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to all who seek it in sincerity, every man may understand these truths for himself. God has granted to men a strong foundation upon which to rest their faith. {GC 526.2}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

Through His Spirit God makes His word a vivifying power. It is quick and powerful, exerting a strong influence upon minds, not because of the learning or intelligence of the human agent, but because divine power is working with the human power. {8T 55.2}

Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, a new principle of mental and spiritual power was to be brought to man, who, through association with divinity, was to become one with God. Christ, the redeemer and restorer, was to sanctify and purify man's mind, making it a power that would draw other minds to Himself. It is His purpose, by the elevating, sanctifying power of the truth, to give men nobility and dignity. He desires His children to reveal His character, to exert His influence, that other minds may be drawn into harmony with His mind. . . . {RC 17.4}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. {GW 285.3}