

The Word

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That the blessed God, Eternal, Majestic in glory and power, should deign to speak to men is at once most blessed and withal challenging in its character. Blessed indeed since by it we have been introduced into a sphere of unspeakable joy — "Being *born again* . . . by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1: 23). The precious gift of faith the principle upon which "the just shall live" (Galatians 3: 11); that by which, amongst other things, the believer is "justified" (Romans 5: 2); is sanctified (Acts 26: 18); has power to overcome the world (1 John 5: 4); wisdom to discern the hand of the Creator (Hebrews 11: 3); comes to us by the medium of that same Word — "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10: 17). The Word of God is the spiritual sustenance of the believer — "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God" (Luke 4: 4). What purity of motive and conduct would thus ensue, for "every Word of God is pure"!

As we are helped in our appreciation of these and other like precious truths may we more readily face the challenge of the Scripture — "For 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 . . . a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4: 12).

The present dispensation is greatly favoured by the uniquely precious way in which the Word of God has reached us — "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1: 1, 2). Another translation says "spoken to us in Son." "It is God Himself who speaks, not by another; not as the father nor in the Person of the Father; not merely by the Holy Spirit, but as Himself a divine Person, and that Person *is the Son*" (J.N.Darby) The first few verses of John 1 make it perfectly clear that the One through whom God has spoken bears the title of "the Word," and that as *such* He eternally was — "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We do well to bow in adoration and worship before the glorious greatness of the blessed One through whom the communications of God have reached us! Listen to His words in John 17: 24 — "Father . . . Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Every such communication carries the authority, and majesty of eternity itself and reveals the love of One who dwelt eternally in the bosom of divine affections. We quote again, "It is the revelation of the eternal Logos before all creation . . . the Word who existed in eternity before the world was; and, consequently did not begin to exist. The language of the Gospel is as plain as possible, and, like the sword of paradise, turns every way, in opposition to the thoughts and reasonings of men, to defend the divinity and personality of the Son of God" (Synopsis on John 1). The foregoing is stressed because unless we are helped by the Spirit's power, to appreciate more fully the personal glory and greatness of the Son, we shall be slow to accept the authority and value the blessing contained in the word He communicates.

Referring again to the verse in Hebrews 1, there can be no suggestion of weakening in any way the previous utterances of the blessed God who "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets." The Lord Jesus puts a most precious construction on such communications when speaking to two of His own "He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24: 27). In Matthew 5: 18 we have again His own words that He came to fulfil the prophetic word — not "one jot or tittle" of which should fail. The words are the *smallest* characters in the Hebrew and Greek languages — one of them being merely a tiny point used for distinguishing between one letter and another. Thus we have the Lord's own word that not one iota of divine speaking will be set aside.

Scripture references to the Word of God are many and varied, and in their entirety quite beyond the scope of this paper. We can but call attention to a very few. Without question the Word of God is able to meet every problem — physical, moral or spiritual. In Proverbs 30: 5 we read — "Every word is very (exceeding) pure." What a resource in this world of impurity and evil! "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? *By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word*" (Psalm 119: 9). With but two or three exceptions every verse in this Psalm of 176 verses refers in some way to the importance of God's Word for His people. John in his first epistle speaks of the young men as strong and able to overcome the wicked one — the Word of God having an abiding place with them. Truly victorious living. Do we not see the *perfect* expression of this in our blessed Lord when tempted of the devil in the wilderness? It is by this same word that we are "sanctified" — set apart from all that is inconsistent with the truth (John 17: 17); it is by the "washing of water by the Word," under the skilful hand of Christ, that believers are sanctified and cleansed to be presented eventually "without spot" (Ephesians 5). Beloved, as He, our precious Lord, left this scene "without spot" (Hebrews 9: 14 — ever intrinsically thus) so shall we, through the activities of His ceaseless love, be presented to Himself "without spot."

It is the "Word of Truth," and as such bears the impress of the whole Godhead. God is spoken of as the "God of Truth" (Isaiah 65: 16); the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself — "I am . . . The Truth;" and John in both gospel and epistles refers to the "Spirit of Truth." It is the truth of God's Word which sets us free from all the deceit and untruth of a world which lies in the lap of the devil — he who is a liar from the onset. To be found walking in the truth is a source of positive joy to those who would minister the word of God to His people (2 John and 3 John).

It is "the word of the gospel" in which is embodied "the word of salvation," "the word of God's grace," the "word of reconciliation," of "righteousness" and of "power." In short, in God's precious word we see the full and complete revelation of His eternal purpose, the disclosure of His heart of love and the manifestation of the resources which are at His disposal for the meeting of His creatures' every need. From it, as the "word of life" there issues forth a stream of eternal refreshment which gladdens the hearts of believers as they tread the arid and desolate wastes of a scene robbed of all joy and contentment by the inroads of sin, and where all lies under the gloom of death. It is "the word of promise," every whit of which shall certainly come to pass. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119: 89). All is secured in the true "Ark of the testimony" — "For *all* the promises of God in *Him* are yea, and in Him, Amen." In the increasing moral and spiritual darkness of the present day we have in God's Holy Word "a more sure word of prophecy . . . a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise." Man's ability to produce more and more powerful methods for destruction should cause us as believers to move soberly and prayerfully before our God, but we have no cause for uncertainty. Peter tells us in his second letter that "the heavens and the earth, *which are now*, by the same word (of God) are kept in store, reserved . . . against the day of judgment." Nothing can advance or retard the set word of God! But before that day we listen with unbounded joy to Paul's letter to the Thessalonian Christians as he details "*by the Word of the Lord*" the precious truth of the quickly coming moment when the sleeping and living saints will be "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4). How apt in this connection is the "*word of My patience*" (Revelation 3: 10).

Finally, we note the expression "the word (logos) of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1: 18). In the "word of the cross" God has been pleased to reveal His mind in relation to the wisdom and pride of man — and in that cross has set him, as such, completely aside. But, thank God, another blessed man, God's Christ, has been revealed, One in whom "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" are made available to the believer. It is in *Him* that the testimony of God is centred; He as

the *eternal living Word* can alone, through the Spirit of God, make the *written word* fully effective in our hearts, and we are exhorted (Colossians 3: 16) to "let the word of Christ dwell in us (you) richly in all wisdom." The remainder of the verse is rich in its potentiality!

The political and nominally religious circles of the world have but little appreciation of the Word of God. Luke 3: 1, 2 shows that, while God is fully cognisant of their position and territory, His word is expressly given to a man outside of them all — John Baptist in the wilderness.

There is a remarkable expression in Psalm 138: 2, "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name." Is there some explanation of this in verses 4 and 5? "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of Thy mouth"? Will not the glory of the LORD (v.5) be enhanced in the eyes of the great ones of the earth as His word reaches their hearts and minds? "Though the LORD be high, yet hath He respect to the lowly." Is not this the testimony of how He is reaching out through His Word to those ready to receive it? Of one blessed fact we can be certain, Christ, the Eternal Word, will put His impress in the day to come upon every feature of the Word of God, creation will reflect His greatness; myriads will be conformed to His likeness, and *all* will speak forth His worth and glory.

God our Father, Thee we worship,
Praise Thee evermore that Thou
Leadest us in triumph telling
All Thy boundless love e'en now;
May we therefore still be learning,
In Thy Word Thy counsels trace,
'Till the day that Thou displayest
All the glory of Thy grace!