

August 13, 1959 How to Study the Bible

By Ellen G. White

Let the seeker for truth who accepts the Bible as the inspired word of God, lay aside every previous idea, and take that word in its simplicity. He should renounce every sinful practice, and enter the Holy of Holies with heart softened and subdued, ready to listen to what God says. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 1}

Do not carry your creed to the Bible, and read the Scriptures in the light of that creed. If you find that your opinions are opposed to a plain "Thus saith the Lord," or to any command or prohibition He has given, give heed to the Word of God rather than to the sayings of men. Let every controversy or dispute be settled by "It is written." {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 2}

The mistake made by the Roman Catholic is that he reads the Bible in the light of the priests and rulers of the church, the early fathers, or other Catholic expositors. Laying aside all creeds or articles prescribed by any church, we are to read the Bible as the word of God to us. The Light of the world will enable us to distinguish between truth and antagonistic errors. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 3}

Let the heart be softened and subdued by the spirit of prayer before the Bible is read. Truth will triumph when the spirit of truth cooperates with the humble Bible student. How precious the thought that the Author of truth still lives and reigns. Ask Him to impress your minds with the truth. Your searching of the Scriptures will then be profitable. Christ is the great Teacher of His followers, and He will not leave you to walk in darkness. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 4}

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity, one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 5}

Those who with humility of heart search the Scriptures, with a sincere desire to know and obey the truth will not be left to walk in darkness. Jesus says, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The whole Bible is a revelation of Christ. But you may read the Scriptures from morning till night, and unless you humbly submit your will to the will of God, you cannot receive a saving knowledge of the gospel. As you see the truth plainly stated, lay aside every false position, however dear it may be to the selfish heart. Some will take a text, wrest it from its true bearing, and force it into service to sustain some preconceived opinion. By linking together isolated passages of Scripture, they may deceive others. But what appears to be Bible proof for their position is no proof whatever; for the scriptures are not used in their true setting. In this way error is often magnified, and truth diminished. Those who thus wrest the scriptures to sustain error, greatly dishonor God, and in the day of judgment, they will be held responsible for the disobedience of those who through their sophistries have been led to disregard the divine law. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 6}

Those who desire to know the truth concerning the Sabbath of the Lord are not left to the guidance of uncertain suppositions. But let them not depend upon the teachings of the fathers, or any other human agency, but upon the words spoken by the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Bible is the inspired word of God. In it are to be found the laws of heaven. And from the Bible alone can we learn the truth regarding the Sabbath. God's word is plain. The fourth commandment is definite and explicit, and reveals the divine origin of the Sabbath. And further, the Lord said to Moses: {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 7}

"Speak thou . . . unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord:

whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:13-17). {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 8}

May the Lord help us to seek Him with the whole heart, that we may find Him. He will not be trifled with. Those who, though having opportunity to find the true path, presumptuously depart from it will some day when too late, realize their terrible mistake. Eternal life is for those only who continue to obey God. For them Christ has purchased salvation. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 9}

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 10}

When Jesus told His followers to search the Scriptures, He referred to the Old Testament Scriptures; for the New Testament was still unwritten. The Bible is made up of many parts--history, biography, song and praise, prayer, and prophecy. But all is inspired of God, and "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." In the term "scripture" is included the whole treasure house of revelation and knowledge, in whatever form it is given. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 11}

Let no one seek to limit the circulation of the Scriptures. God speaks through various channels, and the sacred truths are to be sought as the miner seeks for gold. God has promised that He will guide all who desire to be taught into all truth. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 12}

The Bible is the greatest educational book in the world, and should be used in every school. Whatever their previous education or conceptions, to many minds the simple reading of God's Word will bring conviction, and even though in many cases the Word may be misapplied and misinterpreted, yet in after years, many because of what they can remember of its teachings may be able to distinguish between truth and error. Let us not be numbered with those who seek to limit the circulation of the Scriptures.--Undated manuscript 142. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 13}

If you read the Bible carefully, you will see what reformation is needed in yourself in order for you to be a faithful shepherd of the flock of Christ. Compare scripture with scripture, and then open your own heart. Gain light yourself and then from an experimental knowledge, you can set before the people of God what constitutes Christian character. The power of the Holy Spirit will accompany your words if your own life is a representation of the truth which sanctifies the character; for you will then be a living epistle known and read of all men. . . . {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 14}

The natural man always remains the same. He is what hereditary tendencies, nationality, education, and circumstances have made him. But when the natural man is changed by the grace of Christ, then the transformation is seen in the new man, the new heart, new purposes, new impulses. The word of Christ is received which is spirit and life; then we eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God. Then there is fruit in the heart, fruit in the lips, fruit in the character. Some bearing thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred fold.--Letter 13, 1888. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 15}

All who engage in this work as colaborers with Christ must not only be willing to preach the truth, but to practice it. Of the professedly learned and pious people of His day Christ said, "Ye are both ignorant of the scriptures and of the power of God. Ye teach for doctrine the commandments of men." He longed to fill the whole nation with the spirit of His mission of love, that they might unite with Him in the work of saving the world. The Holy Spirit would now come to our workers if they would earnestly seek for it. There will be no change made in the divine economy in order to bring around marked changes in the religious world. Men and women must arise to the emergency; they must receive the golden oil, the divine communication in rich blessings. This will enable them to arise and shine,

because their light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon them. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 16}

Those who claim to believe the Word of God, and yet cherish their own hereditary and cultivated traits of character, are the greatest stumbling blocks we shall meet as we present the grand, holy truths for this time. Those who believe present truth are to practice the truth, live the truth. They are to study the Word and eat the Word, which means eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. They are to bring that Word, which is spirit and life, into their daily, practical life. It is the bread from heaven, and it will give life to the world. Power will be given to every man and woman who will eat of the bread that came down from heaven. Oh, cannot we take this in? Cannot we comprehend it? Why is our imagination so dull? "This is the will of him that sent me," said Christ, "that every one [how comprehensive, how far-reaching] that seeth the Son, and believeth on him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." If this, the life of Christ, be in us, what may we not accomplish in His name? "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 17}

Christian culture will follow the labors of every soul who will practice the truth conscientiously under all circumstances. But there is altogether too much skimming over the surface. There is a mine of precious ore, hitherto only in the possession of a very few. A careful and thorough digging will put us in possession of untold resources, represented as the golden oil, emptied from the two olive trees, into the golden pipes, and from them into the golden bowls, to pour forth and enrich others. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 18}

We are in great need of large-hearted, level-headed men, who are true Christians, and who will show that they are feeding upon the Word of God, at home and abroad. Those of our faith and not of our faith will take knowledge of these men that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. They will see that they are yoked up with Christ, and are drawing with Him, that they are apt scholars learning of Him His meekness and lowliness of heart. These will not complain of the yoke of Christ or murmur when lifting His burdens. They will march cheerfully forward, singing, yes, making melody to God in their hearts. The yoke of Christ is easy, and His burden is light. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 19}

Oh, it makes every difference with those who study the Scriptures as to what and how they shall understand the Word, whether they eat it or not. The Word of God, if eaten, will give spiritual sinew and muscle. Those who eat and digest this Word will practice it. Their eyes, anointed with the heavenly eye salve will see other lessons in the Holy Word than those seen by readers whose hearts are not cleansed, refined, and elevated. Under the working of the Holy Spirit the conscience will recognize a pure, high standard of righteousness that puts to shame the low, cheap ideas of the surface reader, whose mind is corrupted with sin. They see that the doers of the Word alone are justified before God. Those who hear and fail to do are in no wise better, morally or spiritually, for hearing. Those who will deny self, and make any and every sacrifice for Christ's sake will be able to teach because their precept and example harmonize.--Letter 34, 1896. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 20}