

1. The Foundation of Divine Truth

“Every true doctrine makes Christ the center, every precept receives force from His words.”-6T 54. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11. “Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” Matthew 7:24, 25.

SELECTED REFERENCES

GC 593-602; FE 123-137; M11 458-466; [1] Pages 68-110. [2] Pages 4-25.

Memorize: Romans 15:4.

A. THE OBJECT AND AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Romans 10:17; John 17:3; Matthew 4:4.

“There is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the word of God: that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other clearer texts. . . . This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us.”-From the Protest of the Princes at Spire; quoted in “History of Protestantism,” by J. A. Wylie, Vol. I, P. 550.

“In our time there is a wide departure from their [the Scriptures] doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle - the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty.” - GC 204, 205.

“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority. Not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus says the Lord’ in its support.” - GC 595.

“In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.” - GC, Introduction, vii.

“Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the word of God above the visible church.” - GC 204. “It is not enough to know what others have thought or learned about the Bible. Every one must in the judgment give account of himself to God, and each should now learn for himself what is truth.” - Ed 188. “If the Bible is a revelation from God, it must be consistent with itself; and . . . as it was given for man’s instruction, it must be adapted to his understanding.” - GC 319.

“Everything we believe as doctrine, everything we do as duty, and everything we observe as worship, must have this authority, ‘The Master says it.’ All tampering with Scripture as the sole and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and all tampering with conscience as bound by that rule, is a guilty resistance of the authority of Christ, and a perilous thing to our welfare.” - John Angel James.

B. RULES FOR LEARNING DIVINE TRUTH.

2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10; Psalm 119:18.

“The true object of real Bible study is to bring us into personal contact with this infinite God. We are to see Him in the beauty and glory of His character, and to experience more than a theoretical companionship. The very knowing of God in this way brings eternal life with all its great possibilities and inspirations into the soul of him who has made this living contact with the living God. . . . if the Bible gives us this living experience of our consciousness of God, and of His companionship, we are reaching the goal of the great privileges that God sets before the individual in His inspired Book.” - A. O. Tait, editorial in the Signs of the Times, Oct. 22, 1929.

RULE 1.

Approach the Bible with reverence, and a sincere desire to know and accept its truths. John 7:17; 1 Corinthians 2:11.14.

“We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation, and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; and the promise is sure, that it will be given. . . . But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God’s word in a perverted light.” - TM 107, 108.

“The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says.” - Ed 189. “We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God, and a sincere desire to learn His will.” - GC 599. “When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.”-SC 115. “The Bible should never be studied without prayer.” - GC 599.

RULE 2.

Receive the Bible as the literal voice of God to you. John 10:27, 28; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

“The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts. The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.” - 6T 393.

“The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise, ‘If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.’ . . . One reason why many theologians have no clearer understanding of God’s word is, they close their eyes to truths which they do not wish to practice. An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness.” -GC 599.

RULE 3.

The Bible is its own best commentary. Isaiah 28:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 2.13, 14.

Many think that they must consult commentaries on the Scriptures in order to understand the meaning of the word of God, and we would not take the position that commentaries should not be studied; but it will take much discernment to discover the truth of God under the mass of the words of men.”-FE 187, 188.

46 Be sure that the evidence of truth is in the Scripture itself. One scripture is the key to unlock other scriptures. The rich and hidden meaning is unfolded by the Holy Spirit of God, making plain the word to our understanding.”---FE 390. “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.” - GC 598.

We should seek to find all texts that have a bearing on the subject, to gain a grasp of the entire scope of the doctrine by the obvious harmony of the whole; at the same time no text must be given a meaning inconsistent with its context. Base no truth solely on the thought of a lone isolated text, with disregard to others which qualify and clarify its true intent.

“The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture itself - comparing spiritual things with spiritual- which yields a threefold result, interpretation, illustration, illumination. The Bible is its own lexicon, defining its terms; its own expositor, explaining its meaning; its own interpreter, unlocking its mysteries.”- Arthur T. Pierson, in “Knowing the Scriptures,” page 90.

RULE 4.

In the consideration of circumstantial evidence, original language and the purpose of writing are primary; customs and geography are helpful, but tradition is unreliable and often misleading. Colossians

2:8; Titus 3:9.

“We advise every reader, if possible, to study the originals; if that is impracticable, to get the best helps to the understanding of them, in the way of literal rendering, such as that of Rotherham, Spurrell, Young, etc., and the most devout commentators. But it behooves us to remember that, though our great standard versions are only reflections of the original, they are-like our own image in a mirror, which, though not the man himself, is for all practical purposes his reproduction sufficient guides in the understanding of God’s word, so that it is only the most captious who object to them because they are only translations.”-Arthur T. Pierson, in “Knowing the Scriptures,” page 85.

“One half of the force of Bible truth is lost through lack of knowledge of Bible lands.”-J. W. Miller.

“ Men need not the dim light of tradition and custom to make the Scriptures comprehensible. It is just as sensible to suppose that the sun, shining in the heavens at noonday, needs the glimmerings of the torchlight of earth to increase its glory. The fables or the utterances of priests or of ministers are not needed to save the student from error. Consult the Divine Oracle, and you have light.” - FE 391.

RULE 5.

There must be perseverance in research. Acts 17:11; John 5:39.

“To skim over the surface will do little good. Thoughtful investigation and earnest, taxing study are required to comprehend it. There are truths in the word which are like veins of precious ore concealed beneath the surface. By digging for them, as the man digs for gold and silver, the hidden treasures are discovered.” - FE 390.

“Tii daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. One passage thus studied until its significance is clear, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view, and no positive instruction gained.” - Ed 189.

RULE 6.

No vital truth is left obscure; all that is essential to salvation is made clear. Deuteronomy 29:29; 2 Peter 3:16, 17.

“There are in the Scriptures some things which are hard to be understood, and which, according to the language of Peter, the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction. We may not, in this life, be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are no vital points of practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. When the time shall come, in the providence of God, for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out, and united in a perfect chain. Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err, or walk in darkness.”-2T 692.

RULE 7.

We are not permitted in any wise to add anything to or subtract anything from the Scriptures: first portion, Deuteronomy 4:2; middle portion, Proverbs 30:5, 6; nor last, Revelation 22:18, 19.

KEY TEXTS

2 Timothy 3:16,17 John 7:17 2 Timothy 2:15
1 Corinthians 10:11 John 5:39, 40 Isaiah 28: 10

THOUGHT QUESTION

1. What reasons had God for committing His instruction to writing?
2. Can God expect an individual with the Bible alone to know what is truth?
3. What place has reason, has faith, in Bible study?
4. Can all texts be taken in their literal sense? Answer with examples.
5. Of what importance is Bible study to you?

TEST QUESTIONS

Answer With Ample Bible Proof

1. What objects does the Bible meet in God's plan for mankind?
2. Is the Bible the sole authority in theology?
3. How only can any one comprehend divine truth?
4. What principles must be followed in arriving at a true understanding of any text?
5. Against what errors are we warned while seeking truth?

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Modern Classification of the Bible Library

Old Testament

1. Law or the Pentateuch (5 books)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

2. History (12 books)

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

3. Wisdom (5 books)

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

4. Major Prophets (5 books)

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

5. Minor Prophets (12 books)

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah

Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

New Testament	Date Written*
1. Gospels (4 Books)	
Matthew	39
Mark	43
Luke	56
John	96
2. History (1 Book)	
Acts	63
3. Paul's Epistles (14 Books)	
Romans	57
1 Corinthians	57
2 Corinthians	57
Galatians	56
Ephesians	62
Philippians	62
Colossians	62
1 Thessalonians	52
2 Thessalonians	52
1 Timothy	63
2 Timothy	63
Titus	63
Philemon	62
Hebrews	62
4. General Epistles (7 Books)	
James	66
1 Peter	52
2 Peter	63
1 John	98
2 John	98
3 John	98
Jude	66
5. Prophecy (1 Book)	
Revelation	94

Old Testament classification according to the accepted Hebrew in the time of Christ, and recognized by Him was: Law, Prophets, and Psalms. Luke 24:44.

See "Source Book for Bible Students," ed. 1919, Review and Herald Publishing Association, page 86.

2. The Word Is of God

“This Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the only complete guide to everlasting blessedness: men may err, but the Scripture cannot; for it is the word of God Himself, who can neither mistake, deceive, nor be deceived. . . From this word all doctrines must be derived and proved; and from it every man must learn his duty to God, to his neighbor, and to himself.”-Dr. Adam, Clarke, in “Clavis Biblica” (“The Preacher’s Manual”), page 64.

SELECTED REFERENCES

GC Intro. v-xii. 5T 698-711. Ed 169-184. [3] Pages 145-182. [4] Article, “Bible.” [5] Pages 88-101.

Memorize: 2 Peter 1:21.

A. THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WRITINGS.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.” - GC, Introduction, vi, vii.

“As several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.” - GC, Introduction, vi.

‘The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God;’ yet they are expressed in the words of men, and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ “ - 5T 747.

B. PROOFS THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Testimony of internal evidence.

2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16; Amos 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

This claim cannot be set aside without contrary evidence.

2. Testimony of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:18; John 5:46, 47; Luke 24:27; 16:31.

If we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the Old as well as the New Testament.

3. Testimony of its human writers.

2 Samuel 23:1,2; Jeremiah 1:4-9; Ezekiel 2:7; Luke 1:70.

These were either good men or great impostors; neither could have fathomed and revealed divine truth.

4. Testimony of its unity.

Matthew 12:25.

About forty writers, widely differing in occupation and experience, scattered far over the earth from Egypt to Babylon, from Midian to Rome, wrote at intervals during fifteen hundred years; yet, when their writings are brought together, one Author and a single theme are seen throughout the whole.

5. Testimony of science.

Psalms 89:34-37; Jeremiah 31:35-37; Job 26:7; 28:25.

The Bible was not given as a textbook on science-except the science of salvation. Nevertheless, every statement therein agrees with man’s discoveries, for the Creator is its author. Furthermore, it goes far beyond mankind’s puny mind, “for there are mysteries in the realm of natural science which still elude the research of the wisest.” “Nature, in all its length and breadth, terms with manifestations of some