

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

JOHN 4:23



But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in **spirit** and in **truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:23)

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
(John 17:17)

Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to **seek Him**, to **acknowledge their sins**, and to **pray for one another**, He will meet with them by His Spirit. But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing. Unless they worship Him in spirit and truth and in the beauty of holiness, their coming together will be of no avail. **Of such the Lord declares**, “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but **their heart is far from Me**.” Matthew 15:8, 9. Those who worship God must worship Him “in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” John 4:23. (*PK 50.4*)

- ❖ . . . for whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, **a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God.** (*1SM* 142.1)

- ❖ In the period of disappointment **after the passing of the time in 1844**, fanaticism in various forms arose. . . . Yet these persons were our beloved brethren, and we were longing to help them. I went into their meetings. There was much **excitement, with noise and confusion**. One could not tell what was piped or what was harped. Some appeared to be in vision, and fell to the floor. Others were **jumping, dancing, and shouting**. They declared that as their flesh was purified, they were ready for translation. This they repeated again and again. I bore my testimony in the name of the Lord, placing His rebuke upon these manifestations. (2SM 34.1)

- ❖ 1900 fanaticism in Indiana—“Again and again in the progress of our work, fanatical movements have arisen, and when the matter was presented before me, I have had to bear a message similar to the message I am bearing to my brethren from Indiana. I have been instructed by the Lord that this movement in Indiana is of the same character as have been the movements in years past.” (2SM 33.4)

- ❖ The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me **would take place just before the close of probation**. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be **shouting**, with **drums, music, and dancing**. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. (*2SM* 36.2)

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

JOHN 6:63



It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. (John 6:63)

We are to feed upon Christ, **the living Bread** from heaven. Our souls are to thirst for the waters of salvation, and we are to study the Scriptures, and practice the truths they teach in our daily life. Those who do this will reveal the fact that they are feasting upon the Bread of life, eating the flesh of the Son of God, and drinking daily of the waters of salvation. If we closely study **the words of Christ**, and take heed to His lessons, we shall feed upon His flesh, for the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Christ says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” [John 6:63.] (*10LtMs*, Lt 2, 1895, par. 19)

The words Christ has spoken, the spirit He has revealed in all His lessons to His disciples, are as the bread of life, the flesh and blood of the Son of God. He said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” [John 6:63.] But all He has said is contested by the confederacy of evil; nevertheless precious truth must be presented in its native force. The deceptive errors that are widespread, and that are to lead the world captive, are to be unveiled. Every effort that is possible is being made to ensnare souls with subtle reasonings, to turn them from the truth to fables, and to prepare them to be deceived by strong delusions. (*10LtMs*, Lt 11, 1895, par. 9)



And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:25)

- ❖ . . . for whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, **a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God. (1SM 142.1)**

SATAN'S
COUNTERFEITS

As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ, and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God. (4SP 337.1)

Says the great deceiver: “We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true **Sabbath**, reveals also **the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary**, and shows that the last work for man’s salvation is now going forward. Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the **world** and the **church** also. (*4SP* 337.2)

“The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the **[#1] Sabbath of our creating**. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church-members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God, and follow custom and tradition. (*4SP* 337.3)

“I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a **perfect law of liberty** shall be represented as **[#2] a yoke of bondage**. The people accept their ministers’ explanations of Scripture, and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to my will. (*4SP* 338.1)

“But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbath-keepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the Sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be **driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation.** When once we have the power, we will show that we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish Church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees, and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When **death** shall be made the penalty of violating our Sabbath, then **many who are now ranked with commandment-keepers will come over to our side.** (4SP 338.2)

“But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our [#3] **wisdom** and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ by **worldliness, lust, and pride**. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but **indulgence of appetite or the lower passions**, which will **confuse judgment and destroy discrimination**, will cause their fall. (4SP 339.1)

“Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. [#4] Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasure here, and fix their affections upon earthly things. We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God’s cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks. The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. Make them [#5] care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God’s people.

(4SP 339.2)

“Through those that have a [#6] form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us great harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will **serve as decoys** to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion. (4SP 339.3)

“Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandment-keepers must be untiring. We must be **[#7] present at all their gatherings**. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance, and employ all our seductive arts to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it. (4SP 340.1)

“We must cause distraction and division. We must [#8] **destroy their anxiety for their own souls**, and lead them to criticise, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from his presence; and all who follow our example will meet a similar fate.” (4SP 340.3)

The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them, not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. **With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God.** Though hidden from sight, he is working with all diligence to control the minds of the worshipers. Like a skillful general, he lays his plans beforehand. As he sees the messenger of God searching the Scriptures, he takes note of the subject to be presented to the people. Then he employs all his cunning and shrewdness to so control circumstances that the message may not reach those whom he is deceiving on that very point. The one who most needs the warning will be urged into some business transaction which requires his presence, or will by some other means be prevented from hearing the words that might prove to him a savor of life unto life. . . . He tempts men to **the indulgence of appetite or to some other form of self-gratification**, and thus benumbs their sensibilities, so that they fail to hear the very things which they most need to learn. (4SP 341.1, .2)

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to **neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures** will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to **seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree.** (4SP 341.3)

It is Satan's plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance, and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in his word, assent to some principles of truth, and **pass as Christians**; and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as scriptural doctrines. (*4SP* 342.2)

The position that it is of **no consequence what men believe**, is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel.

(*4SP* 343.1)

- ❖ The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world, are the work of our great adversary to so confuse minds that they shall not discern the truth.
- ❖ In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, they seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context . . .
- ❖ Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning.
- ❖ By the cry of liberality, men are blinded to the devices of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the word of truth by human speculations, the law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free. (*4SP* 345.1)
- ❖ To many, scientific research has become a curse; their finite minds are so weak that they lose their balance. They cannot harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements, and they think that the Bible is to be tested by their standard of “science falsely so called.”

- ❖ It is a masterpiece of Satan's deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known, and which he does not intend that we shall understand.
- ❖ Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible, are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet their consciences. . . . Satan is ready to supply the heart's desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth.

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of his deep designs. The Lord permits his people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because he takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory. He could not, consistently with his own glory, shield them from temptation; for **the very object of the trial is to prepare them to resist all the allurements of evil.** (*4SP* 350.1)

Satan is well aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted.

Therefore he seeks to draw away the soldiers of the cross from their strong fortification, while he lies in ambush with his forces, ready to destroy all who venture upon his ground. **No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer.** Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand his word.

Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually, “Lead us not into temptation.” (4SP 350.2)

- ❖ The Bible is the word of God.
- ❖ What does the Bible say about itself?
- ❖ We are to believe what God says in his word not because we understand it and it is reasonable to us, because we may not understand it and it may not be something we can reason out, but because God has said it.
- ❖ But to this *man* will I look, *Even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. (Isaiah 66:2)
- ❖ I Thessalonians 2:13
- ❖ Isaiah 55:8-11
- ❖ Hebrews 4:12 RV
- ❖ John 1:1-4

I. Questions on 1 Thess. 2:13.

1. With what is the word of God contrasted?
2. How much difference is there between the two?
3. What does the word of God do?
4. Upon what condition does it work?
5. Does it make any difference how we receive the word? How much?

PAUL knew whom he had believed (2 Tim. 1: 12), and was aware that it made a great difference how the word was received (1 Cor. 2: 4, 5). The difference between God's word and man's word is just as great as the difference between God and man, which is simply infinite. See Ps. 146 : 3 ; Isa. 26 : 4 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 25. God's word works in those who believe it as God's word. The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1: 16), and the word of the Lord is preached by the gospel (1 Peter 1 : 25), but it must be believed in order to be of profit (Heb. 4 : 2).

II. Questions on Isa. 55 : 8-11 .

1. What are words intended to convey ?
2. How much difference is there between God's thoughts and man's thoughts ?
3. How much difference, then, will there be between God's word and man's word ?
4. What definite results are produced by rain and snow ?
5. What comparison is made between these agencies and God's word ?
6. How must the word be received in order that it may accomplish such results ?

MAN puts his own thoughts into words (Luke 6 : 45), and what one man has thus clothed with language, another man can study out, and so exhaust his meaning. Not so with God's word. His words contain a depth of meaning which only his Spirit can reveal to us (1 Cor. 2 : 11, 12), and for this purpose was the Spirit promised (John 16: 13 ; 1 Cor. 2 : 10). As rain and snow are sent upon the earth to accomplish definite results, so God sends his word (Ps 107: 20; Matt. 8: 8). It is sent to bring salvation (Acts 13: 26; James 1: 21), and it will accomplish this for all who receive it. As the land is made fruitful by receiving the rain (Heb. 6 : 7), so God will cause righteousness to spring forth (Isa. 61: 11). When spoken faithfully the word will have a powerful effect (Jer. 23 : 28, 29), and it is able to build up (Acts 20 : 32) those who receive it.

III. Questions on Heb. 4:12, Revised Version.

1. What characteristics of God's word are here mentioned?
2. Are these true of man's word? Show the difference quite fully.

THE Revised Version of Heb. 4 : 12 is as follows: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." The words of God are not only living words, but they are spirit and life (John 6 : 63) to those who believe them. Life seems to belong to everything that is associated with God. He not only has life in himself (John 5 : 26) but his throne is a living throne (Ezekiel 1). Besides this we have the word of life (Phil. 2: 16), the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7), the bread of life (John 6: 48), the river of life, and the tree of life (Rev. 22 : 1, 2). The word is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6: 17), for the Spirit dwells in the word (compare James 1: 18 and 1 Peter 1: 23 with John 3 : 5), and so it is said of Christ, who spoke for God (John 3 : 34), that a sharp two-edged sword went out of his mouth (Rev. 1: 16).

For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12 KJV)

For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12 RV)

HEBREW 4:12

- ❖ Quick—living, alive
- ❖ Word—word, message
- ❖ Powerful—*energēs*—effective, active
- ❖ Soul and spirit—*psychē* and *pneuma*—*psuchē kai pneuma*—life and breath

IV. Questions on John 1 : 1-4.

1. Who is meant by the Word?
2. Why is He called the Word?
3. What is found in Him?

CHRIST is called the Word of God (Rev. 19 : 11-13), not only because he spake the words of God (Deut. 18 : 18; John 17 : 8), but also because he was a living proclamation to the world of the character of God (2 Cor 5: 19; John 14 : 9, 10). The mystery of the incarnation, God with us (Matt. 1 : 23), divinity veiled in humanity, is repeated in the word in which the divine Spirit dwells in human language. "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.'

And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God. Those who pronounce upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, accepting some portions as divine, while they reject other parts as human, overlook the fact that Christ, the divine, partook of our human nature, that he might reach humanity. In the work of God for man's redemption, divinity and humanity are combined." As Christ is a personal Saviour (Gal. 2: 20), so God's word is given to each one as an individual. "The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul for whom he gave his beloved Son." His word is to be regarded by each one as though he were the only one to whom God had thus spoken.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or
whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, Let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, That he understandeth and knoweth me, That I *am* the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: For in these *things* I delight, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 9:23–24)