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The Word of God (May 1962)

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Almost every verse of Psalm 119 makes reference to the same subject, the Word of God. In these many references the writer uses ten different words to describe the Holy Scriptures. The spiritual man will see in them many lesson by ascertaining their various meanings.

In our approach to the examination of these terms, we recall Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 2:4, which expresses God's mind for all: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Perchance, also, that of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The Way

This word, found in verses 1, 3, 5, 14, suggests the act of walking. It will be noticed that the word translated "way" in verse 9 is a different word in the original. The Word of God spoken of as the "way" needs no cleansing, but the way of the young man does. When we understand the import of verses 1 and 3, we can visualize the man whose feet are abiding in the Word of God, and the blessing of thus walking. In this state he is described as being similar to Noah, a just man and perfect (Gen. 6:9). This comparison reminds one of a statement by the Apostle John, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1 John 3:6).

The Law

The use of the word “law” indicates the means of issue, to point out, to teach, and, of course, in the context of verse 1, it would mean to teach the counsels of God to His people.

The Word of God is a sign-post, intimating, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” The Divine Law arises in the heart of the Christian, teaching God’s character to and His counsels for His people. How else can one learn of God and His Christ but by the reading of the Bible, the Word of God, and by walking in the paths it points out?

The Testimonies

Among other meanings, the word “testimonies” (Vv. 2 and 14) signifies a going over again, and suggests that to be able to keep God’s testimonies one must go over them again and again, not only to impress them upon the mind, but in order that they be experienced in the life. The divine testimonies must be applied not only to the young convert but to the whole of Christian life and times. Should we find ourselves like David, forsaken by all, would we be able, through the knowledge of the divine testimonies, to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God? Would we be like Paul and Silas able to sing and pray when the night was blackest? Through the going over again of the Word of God in the heart in times of evident adversity, true spiritual strength is manifested by many of God’s beloved people.

Precepts

The idea contained in the word “precept” is that of taking oversight, of enjoining upon others. The word occurs in Psalm 119 in verses 4 and 15. By placing these

two together, we see the need of meditation in the precepts of the Lord, and of keeping them with all diligence. The man who lives according to the statutes of the Word of God, walking in the way, following the issues pointed out by the law, and keeping the testimonies, rejoicing in them the man qualified by his life to enjoin upon others the precepts of the Divine Word. The man who reaches forth with godly exercise to the strenuous work of the overseer is the man who meditates on the precepts of the Word of God, and who finds them the very pleasure of his heart. Such an one is a worthy candidate for the service of a bishop in the assemblies of the saints.

Statutes

We are reminded here of the ancient practice of cutting in stone the decrees of the sovereign; the word statute means to engrave.

The world is full of statutes of many kinds cut in stone, metal, and wood, each, no doubt, being testimony to its originator. The truly spiritual man wants the statutes of the Word of God cut deeply into his heart in order that they remain there. Having them thus permanently fixed, he will readily learn from them, and find constant delight in their lessons.

In using this word “commandment,” the writer wants to carry out its meaning to set up or to constitute. He desires to be built up, or in New Testament language, to be edified, and, as a consequence, to show his love for the Lord by keeping His commandments. Verses 6 and 10 have a sense of continuous action. Their meaning, in all probability is as follows: “I shall not be put to shame when I am having respect unto all Thy commandments,”

and “O let me not continue to wander.” The keeping of God’s commandments gives security and stability to the soul and character.

Righteousness

What a need among the saints of God for balanced thinking and righteous judgment! Of course, the judgments of the Lord are always righteous; His decisions and opinions are ever just and pure. Alas, this cannot be said of men’s judgments. There are times when human opinion is wrong, and man’s decisions altogether improper. It is grand to turn to the Word of God, and to realize that all God’s way are righteous. The danger of some of the best brethren is that they become unbalanced in their thinking; and, of course, that is true among carnal believers as well.

What a need today for righteous thinking and balanced ministry! The truth, the doctrines, of the Word of God are perfectly balanced. The sincere believer learns to value God’s Word as the means of keeping his life in an even tenor.

Judgment

Good judgment is synonymous with good discernment. The word occurs in verses 7 and 13, and somehow pictures a man of wisdom. When discernment results from the reading and study of the Bible, and when it is graciously used among the people of God, it is a great blessing.

Word

In the original of verse 11, the use of “word” is the use of a term that indicates a saying that brings forth light.

The Word of God shines upon the heart and enlightens it. Oh, that all His people would not only walk in the light of His presence, but in public, in the light of His Word!

Word

The expression in verse 9 is somewhat different; word there means to set in a row, to arrange in order. It is not difficult to imagine a man whose ways are out of order, a man with little real purpose before him. How many Christians there are in this very condition! Many are continually missing the mark in life. The cure for this is simple; it is the bringing of life into the light of the Word of God.