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# TEN LESSONS

...IN...

HOW TO READ,  
HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND  
HOW TO REMEMBER THE BIBLE



By ASHLEY S. JOHNSON, LL. D., Pres.  
THE SCHOOL OF THE EVANGELISTS



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# LESSON I.

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## **How I Study the Bible.**

People have asked me how I study the Bible. In these Lessons I give my methods in detail, and I record the honest conviction that any person who *will, can* do as I have done.

First of all I read and study with a definite object. I think that the Bible is often a dull and uninteresting book to people because they approach it with a very hazy idea as to why they do it. To me the Bible is always sweet, new, fascinating and uplifting. Why? Because to me it is really the word of God. If I feel the need of instruction in righteousness I open the Bible with the full and unhesitating conviction that I shall find inspired teachers ready to instruct me. If I feel the need of rebuke I approach my teachers, with a humble spirit, and I always find them ready to administer to my wants. If I feel the need of encouragement I approach those who, having possessed passions like unto my own, were tried just as I am tried, and they console me out of their own experiences. If I want to better prepare myself to instruct others I go to my teachers, and by taking a little

at a time and fixing it in my mind until it becomes as much a part of me as my eye, my ear, my foot, I am prepared to tell the good news just as I learned it.

I experience in one degree and another just such difficulties as every other Bible reader experiences, but I have learned to overcome these difficulties in a large measure. I mention :

### **1. Mind Wandering.**

When I sit down to read I often find it difficult to concentrate my thoughts on what I am reading for two reasons :

1. The reading itself often suggests or starts a train of thought that, while the eye rests on the printed page and mechanically proceeds with the reading, the mind may be in Mexico, Palestine, or the New Jerusalem, or somewhere else.

2. Generally the mind is pre-occupied with the things that perish. If it were possible to make for you an enlarged map of your brain and its thoughts and phantasies for a single day it would greatly astonish you.

These difficulties which are seen and confessed by everybody seem very formidable. In a certain sense they are not, and in another I grant that they are. I can cure mind-wandering but only by the consent of the wanderer.

*Do you wish to be cured?*

### **2. A Bad Memory.**

Is there really such a thing as a bad or poor memory? Except in persons of unsound mind, I answer most em-

phatically, No! What is memory? Note well the answer: Memory is the power of the mind by which we readily recognize and re-enjoy our past impressions and experiences. Why can you not, therefore, recall the past and recognize it? There surely is somewhere a correct answer to this question, for it must be admitted that this great world shrinks to very small proportions to those who can not remember. Your memory is good and I can demonstrate to you that what you call a bad memory, a poor memory, a poor retentive faculty, is in reality good and ready to respond to just and generous treatment. I can prove to you by the most potent arguments and let you test it for yourself, that your memory is good and the Bible is the easiest thing in the world to remember.

*Will you consent to do as I do and as I suggest?*

### **3. Physical Condition.**

Mind-wandering is an act of the mind. Memory is an act of the mind: These statements need no proof. But the mind lives in the body. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to remember that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and keep it pure and clean (I. Cor., 3: 16, 17). Avoid all stimulants and narcotics; keep your nervous system, indeed your whole body, in the best possible condition. Do not consider Bible reading a *duty* and put it off as long as possible, but regard it as a glorious privilege, and attend to it when your body is rested and your mind clear. It costs something in personal comfort, self-sacrifice, and will-power, to be well versed in the

Bible. The privilege is offered to you and you have enough wherewith to buy.

*Are you willing to pay the price?*

#### 4. Poor Attention.

Primarily I study the Bible for myself, but knowledge that ends with me is of but little value to others, therefore I must keep in mind as I read that what I learn is not only to be enjoyed, but *used*. I therefore lay down some laws that so far as I know have neither variation nor exception:

1. *Interest or will governs the attention.*
2. *Attention governs impression.*
3. *Impression governs memory.*
4. *Memory governs expression.*
5. *Expression measures effects.*

The simplicity of these laws will appear as we advance. In our attempts to speak for Christ we can only use what we fully remember; we can only remember what has been fully impressed on the mind, and the mind can only be impressed when the attention is absolutely fixed on the thing to be retained, and the fixing of the attention depends on the will, the interest, or both.

Mind wandering and a poor memory are the results of inattention. If the attention is fixed until the mind is impressed and the image becomes vivid, remembrance is natural, easy and certain. This is proven in three ways:

1. *The first things we learn in childhood are never*

*forgotten because of the vividness of impressions growing out of perfect attention.*

2. *Unpleasant things, experiences, are easily remembered. Rash words, after our loved ones are gone, cannot be forgotten.*

3. *People who bewail their bad memories for the Bible have no difficulty in remembering things in which they are interested, especially neighborhood small talk, funny anecdotes or matters that involve monetary values.*

Good attention is the key to a good understanding, a good memory and to fluent speech. You can give it.

*How? See next Lesson.*



## LESSON II.

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### **How to Read the Bible.**

Read it often.

Read it slowly.

Read it regularly.

Read it earnestly.

Read it persistently.

Read the words by finding out their meaning.

Read the thought by grasping each author's meaning.

Read it consecutively, that is, read it book by book in the regular order.

Read it naturally, that is, read it as you would any other book, ancient or modern.

Read but little at a time, fixing each thought in your mind until it becomes to you a thing of life.

Read it with a prayerful heart, a teachable mind and a broken and contrite spirit.

Read it remembering that dangerous errors grow out of imperfect and one-sided views of things.

Read each passage as if it was the only one, and then read it again in relation to the stupendous whole of which it is only a very small part.

Read it remembering that all truth is harmonious and that God being its author will at last make it plain to you.

Read it asking yourself the questions, who wrote this word, this passage, this chapter, this book, when did he write it, why did he write it and for whom did he write it?

Read it remembering that the great volume is divided into two Testaments, that both converge in the Cross of Christ.

Read the Old Testament as the New Testament concealed; read the New Testament as the Old Testament revealed.

Read it in order to "keep in memory" the things that are written, and bear in mind that you must fix the thought in your mind and then memorize the words in which it is clothed.

Read it, not to store your mind with argumentative weapons, not in order to teach others, but to feed yourself, to enlighten yourself in the ways of God, and then perchance you shall be able to teach others.

Read it feeling that the promises of God are not for some other age or people, but for you now; bring yourself as one man face to face with one God and His truth; do not let your mind wander, hold yourself strictly to your lesson.

Read it comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Read it remembering that God has a place for everything, and therefore you should leave everything in its place.

Read it resisting the devil, remembering that he is always ready to catch the word out of your heart.

Read it forcing your faith out on the promises of God; if you cannot force your faith beyond your works, force your works beyond your faith.

Read it remembering that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are revealed to us therein.

Read it endeavoring to see with the eyes of those who took part in or witnessed the scenes portrayed. Wander through Eden with Adam and Eve. Stand with Abel by his altar. Help Noah build the ark, and stand on some high mountain near by and witness the rising flood. With Abraham listen to the call of Jehovah, and journey with him into the land of the promise; become a sojourner and study with him the faithfulness of the Lord, and go with him and witness the offering of Isaac, and with him behold the day of the Son of God on earth and then identify yourself with the chosen family. Farm with Isaac, and with Jacob wrestle with God until the dawning of a better day. Go with Joseph into Egypt, flee with him from temptation, and sleep with him in the dungeon. With him stand before Pharoah and take part in storing supplies for the famine; live with him through all the thrilling scenes that follow until his death, and continue with his people through the long period of bondage. Begin life over again with Moses and follow his fortunes from the bank of the Nile to the prospect of a throne in Egypt, then flee to the mountains and for forty long years lead

the quiet and unpretentious life of a shepherd; behold the burning bush, hear God's commission to him to deliver Israel, return to the land of Egypt, announce the tidings of great joy, demand emancipation, witness the ten plagues and see the simple shepherd's crook in the hands of a believer in God become more powerful than the scepter of the mightiest nation on earth; follow Israel through the sea and through the wilderness to Sinai, ascend the mountain and with Moses spend forty days and nights with the Lord, come down and see the tabernacle erected, take part in the consecration of the Levites and then for forty long years share the joys and sorrows and labor of Moses as he bears a nation in his bosom, and at last, when the end comes, go with him to Pisgah's height and with one sweep of vision view the land to which he was forbidden to go, attend his solemn, wondrous funeral, then return to the sorrowing host and, if you have not already done so, become acquainted with Joshua the son of Nun; take up the line of march, cross the swelling Jordan, with triumphant Israel invade the land, and identify yourself with the fortunes of the tribes when they settle in Canaan. Become, in order, a friend to Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. Begin life over again with Samuel and be a part of the grand reformation of which he was the center. Join the army of Saul and follow him to his inglorious end. Identify yourself with David the shepherd king and share in the triumphs that extended Israel's borders from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. Attend

the coronation of Solomon, help him build the temple and arise to world-wide fame and see his sun at last set in darkness. Do not join the revolt under Jeroboam, but be true to the God of David. Study the history of the revolting tribes as a friendly brother of the people of Judea. Live through the changes of rulers down to the captivity and the seventy years' sojourn in Babylon. Despise not the down-trodden people of God but go with them on their long journey, hang your harp on the willow trees with theirs and with them sit down by the rivers of Babylon and weep. At the end of the seventy years return with them to their own land and help them repair the walls of Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. Study their national life and especially the Messianic expectation, witness the star of Bethlehem as it rises in the eastern sky and with the shepherds listen to the announcement that the new king has at last been born. Go out with the multitude to the Jordan and be baptized of John. Witness the baptism of Jesus and become His disciple. Follow Him into the wilderness and with Him be tempted of the devil. Keep close to Him, witness His wondrous works, follow Him to the Cross and see Him die, help lay Him in Joseph's new tomb, see the empty tomb and the shining angels, handle Him and eat with Him after His resurrection, go with the people to the Mount of Olives and hear Him announce to them that by virtue of all power in heaven and earth having been given to Him, they shall preach the gospel to the whole creation. See Him as he ascends

to heaven and then go with the chosen ambassadors to Jerusalem to await the descent of the Holy Spirit ; identify yourself with the Church of Jesus Christ and follow the destiny of the apostles down until John, the last survivor, is banished to the Isle of Patmos ; with him enter the open door and from the throne of God see the destiny of the church and the world down the ages to the millennium, through it, and on to the time when the New Jerusalem shall come down to the new earth, after which God and men shall dwell together.

*The Bible is a real book and its characters are real men and women.*

God intends for you to learn and remember it. It will be easy for you to do it after you have learned how to do it. The only way to do it is to fix it in your mind until it is vivid to you in the same sense that it was vivid to those who took part in it or saw the transactions with their own eyes. Your memory is not defective ; it only suffers from abuse. In the following pages I shall point out to you nature's own method, and by nature's own method thou shalt conquer.

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON III.

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### **What is the Bible?**

This is an interesting and important question. Close your eyes, fix your attention on the word Bible for a few moments and then answer the question. How do you answer it? It depends altogether upon what kind of an object you have been accustomed to contemplate at the mention of the word. Probably if I should propound the question to a score of persons I would receive that many different answers. Why is it? I answer, that each person would naturally think of what it is mechanically and materially. One answer would be, The Bible is an old fashioned book bound in plain leather, worn with age, and stained with tears of loved ones who have gone to rest. Another answer would be, The Bible is a small book, small print, bound in black leather. Another answer would be, The Bible is a large book, with panelled cover and brass clasps, large print, illustrated with many pictures. Another answer would be, The Bible is a medium sized book bound in beautiful black leather, golden edges, medium sized print, containing in addition to the two Testaments, references, concordance, Bible dictionary and

maps. Another answer would be more general, The Bible is a well known book in various bindings, containing the Old and New Testaments, divided into books, chapters, and verses, and punctuated in modern style, containing the word of God. A moment's reflection will convince you that the principal part of these answers are defective and misleading. The mention of the word Bible generally brings our minds to the first edition with which we were familiar. The Bible is the Book, and when compared with all human productions, the only Book. It is a great library containing sixty-six books. Yes, but it is more. It is a great library divided into books, chapters, verses and English words. Yes, the books are real subdivisions, but the chapters and verses and English words no more constitute the Bible than the ink or the paper or the binding. While English words are necessary to English speaking people, English words are not necessarily the Bible. Lying back of the binding, paper, ink, chapters, verses and words is the truth, which is the same whether clothed in English, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Greek, or Hebrew.

*The Bible is a store-house of truth.*

In order to adapt it to different nations we translate it into different languages.

*The Bible, the one Bible, the only Bible, is the same in all languages.*

The mechanical part, the book form, is a modern convenience. The original manuscripts are of course in an



entirely different form. Our methods of thinking and speaking often hinder us in our investigation. Our Bibles which are now in different styles were once in rolls of manuscript, and before this they were in the mind of God. In what form were they in His mind? I answer, in thought. Granting this you will see that what we wish is to grasp the thought just as it was with Him. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Now if you do not speak the original languages, you must be shut off from God's thoughts concerning you or men who understood the original languages and your own must transmit or translate the thoughts of God out of the languages in which they were first written into your own. The Bible is truth, Divine truth, and the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—the will of God concerning us. It may be written on parchment in Greek, or printed on paper that will enable the publisher to sell it at twenty-five cents and make a profit on it, but that does not change its real character. Language, like clothing for a man, is a necessity, a convenience, a luxury, but language no more makes the Bible than the coat makes the man. The Bible, not simply the ink, the paper, the binding, the subdivisions, is for man without regard to the race to which he belongs or the language he happens to speak. Man is the same and one, the Bible is the same and one everywhere in the sight of God. It wears different languages or clothes and thus carries the same message of life every-

where. The Bible is for you and for me. The one question therefore is, How can we read it, understand it, not the chapters, not the words, but the thoughts in order to treasure it up, remember it and have at our command at a moment's notice. Can any mechanical system meet this want? No. Can any system of memory-culture supply the need? Emphatically, No. What then can we do?

Reflect on these words: *God is the Maker of man and the Author of the Bible; therefore in the nature of things the Bible must be adapted to man, and man's faculties must be equal to the task of learning and keeping it in memory.*

Why is it that men and women of undoubted faith and consecration fall asleep while reading the word of God? Why is it that our minds often wander while searching the Scriptures? Is it because we are indifferent to its teachings? Perish the thought! I think that we simply try to read the words without seeing *the things*, and as the words suggest something new and we fly away on the wings of fancy, and while our minds wander in infinite space we glide over the language before us without grasping its reality.

Let me emphasize an important fact: *The Bible deals in objects, things.* There is no such thing as history — it is biography. Study the Bible as the lives of its chief actors. Does the Bible bear me out in what I have stated? Let it speak for itself. I submit the testimony of Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ: *for it is the power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom., 1:16).” Again: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: *that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God* (I. Cor., 2: 1-5).” Again: “For our gospel came not unto you *in word only*, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (I. Thess., 1: 5).” Finally: “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is *the power of God* (I. Cor., 1:18).”

There is power in the Bible, power to save. How can we get hold of it and keep it in mind?

Here is a striking and acknowledged fact: *Children never grow tired of hearing the stories of the Bible, and what is learned in childhood is never covered up, never crowded out and never forgotten.*

I remember distinctly the reading I first heard of the Garden of Eden, and I can close my eyes and see Peter walking unto the Master on the waves of Galilee yet!

Did you ever hear a child complain of a bad memory? No, this complaint always comes from grown-up people. Why this difference? I answer with great confidence: The child learns by nature's own method; grown people become artificial and mechanical, and thus lose the great part of what they see, and hear, and read. You cannot account for this difference on the ground that the child is young and vigorous, for a cultivated mind ought to be able to remember and is able to remember better than the young. Did you ever know a child to go asleep while reading or hearing read the story of the bondage in Egypt, or Daniel in the den of lions; or the story of the birth and childhood of Jesus? Never. Yet these accounts will put you to sleep quicker than an opiate! It is a fact that grown-up people can be sensible and practical about everything but the Bible. This is lamentable, but it is true.

Is it true that the majority of people have poor memories? Not unless the creation of man is a failure. Can the ordinary reader remember the Bible? Certainly.

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON IV.

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### **Why Was the Bible Written?**

It is an established and recognized fact that the word of God was originally *spoken* to men. Indeed God spoke all things into existence at the beginning (Heb., 11:3). He spoke to Adam (Gen., 2:15-17), Cain and Abel (Gen., 4:1-15), Noah (Gen., 6:9-15; 9:8-16), Abraham (Gen., 12:1-3), Isaac (Gen., 26:1-5), and Jacob (Gen., 28:10-15). From the creation of Adam to the death of Jacob was a period of two thousand, two hundred and ninety-eight years. The word of God was precious in those days. The silence of God during the years following was unbroken until Moses heard His voice from the burning bush (Ex., 4:1-9). Following the call of Moses God spoke to him almost every day for forty years. Moses is careful to render credit where it belongs, for he repeatedly prefaces his word with the statement: "And the Lord spake unto Moses (Ex., 7:1)." After the death of Moses Joshua became the leader of the nation. It is repeatedly asserted that "the Lord spake unto Joshua (Josh., 1:1)." Through the time of the Judges "*the spirit of the Lord moved*" such men as Gideon (Judg., 6:34), and Jeph-

thah (Judg., 11:29). In the days of Samuel the Lord spoke to him personally, and again we have the striking words, "And the Lord said unto"—Samuel. In the days of Saul, king of Israel, especially after the death of Samuel, it appears that God made His will known in various ways (I. Sam., 28:6). In the days of David the Divine communication was direct: "And it came to pass after this that David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up unto any of the cities of Judah? *and the Lord said unto him, Go up* (II. Sam., 2:1)" King Solomon received a revelation from the Lord "in a dream by night: *and God said, Ask what I shall give thee* (I. Kings, 3:1-15)." In the days of the prophets while God still addressed them personally we are brought face to face with another phase of the subject; in visions the prophets were enraptured to the point that they *saw the things described even before they occurred* (Isa., 1:1). In John's vision in the Isle of Patmos he *saw* the history of the church unfold down to the end.

Revelation is in an important sense grouped around Moses and Jesus. They stand out in the history of time like two towering mountain peaks, unapproached and unapproachable. Study the Old Testament in connection with the life of Moses, and the New Testament in the light of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Consider the two Law-givers. The Lord said, "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him

in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold (Num., 12:6-8).” Again: “He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all, *and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth*; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. *For whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand (Jno., 3:31-35).”

Peter, glancing back over the ages that preceded him, said: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any *private interpretation*; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II. Pet., 1:20, 21).”

Paul, glancing back over the times that preceded him, said: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets*, hath *in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb., 1:1-3).”

God was the first to begin to write His will: "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written, and the tables were the work of God, *and the writing was the writing of God*, graven upon the tables (Ex., 32:15, 16)." Why did the Lord write these commandments? Previous to the ascent to the mount He had said unto Moses: "Come up to me into the mount, and be there, and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; *that thou mayest teach them* (Ex., 24:12)." In reference to the remainder of the law it is declared; that "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord (Ex., 24:4)." Again: "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the



Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it . . . . And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff-neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord: and how much more after my death (Deut., 31:9-13, 24-27).” This seems to be conclusive, but there are other passages which indicate clearly not only the character of the Scriptures but also emphasize their importance as written documents. Here are the words of Jesus: “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and *they are they which testify of me* (Jno., 5:39).” Here are the words of Paul: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, *that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope* (Rom., 15:4).” Hear Paul again: “And that from a child thou hast known the *holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus: all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II. Tim., 3:15-17.)”

The Holy Scriptures were written because they were designed by their Author to be the perpetual and universal instructors of men.

He designs that His creatures shall get the exact thought as He originally had it, and see things and hear things as they appeared to those who first heard them.

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON V.

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### **Plan and Purpose of the Bible.**

The Bible covers all time, extending from eternity past unto eternity to come. What is time? Time to us is length, extension. In order to help you grasp the Bible as a whole, draw a line, any length you choose, but make it straight. At one end put the word "eternity" and at the other end the word "eternity" again. The straight line represents God's purpose extending from eternity past to eternity to come. As I advance, you mark off the periods of time, with a pencil, proportioning the distances to the length of the line according to the instructions I shall give you. After you get the dates and divisions stamped on your mind, rub out the line and let your mind review the line of all time, from eternity to eternity, and then along this line fix the subdivision and dates that I shall give you. If you can fix these in your mind it will be easy for you to fix and remember the other Bible dates, also dates in profane history for yourself, but fix one thing at a time.

Before proceeding further I wish to explain that while the Bible contains much history, it is not by design

a work on history ; while it contains much law, it is not of necessity a law book ; while it contains much prophecy, it is not necessarily a book of prophecy ; while it has much to say about government, it is not to be considered as a book on the science of government ; while it contains much poetry, it is not to be considered strictly a poetical work ; while it contains much biography, it is in no sense a biographical dictionary. All these things are there in abundance and not to be dispensed with ; but they are, in relation to the plan and design of the book, mere incidentals. This explains many difficulties that the Bible student is apt to encounter. The details are so meager, the little incidents that so greatly excite our curiosity are often very obscure. Why is this ? Does the Bible mock our desire for more information ? Not by any means. What then ? The scope and design of the book made it absolutely impossible to go into details about the persons and things about which it says so little, for the reason that in doing so the real design would have been covered up and instead of a medium sized volume with which, in the course of a life-time, one can become familiar, we should have had probably a thousand volumes through which a man could not read in a thousand years ! If you doubt this, suggest something about which you would like to know more than the Bible tells.

The flood ?

Let me see. We should like to know all about the plans and specifications of the ark, where Noah got all

the timber and tools, who helped, what wages he paid, what his workmen thought of the scheme, whether there were any strikes among the workmen, and by what means they fastened the timber together. This would make a large volume. We should like to read the sermons Noah preached during these long years, and upon the supposition that he preached thirty minutes a day the sermons alone would make volume upon volume. We should like to know something about the personal character of Noah and his family and a few of his more distinguished neighbors and friends. This would make another volume. We should like pictures and descriptions of everything that went into the ark, and this would make several more big volumes. We should like to know what Noah thought when the rain came, and whether his wife agreed with him and stood by him, and what they talked about and how they passed the time while in the ark; this would make another volume. Indeed, all we are curious to know about the flood would make a volume larger than the whole Bible, and in the long story the simple yet sublime account would be forever lost.

The Bible has one great thought, and that like a scarlet cord runs through it from cover to cover. It sticks to that one thought and never wavers in its purpose, and men and things are made conspicuous for a moment and drop out of view, simply because they are called and used to serve the purpose in which they are used for an hour, a day, a month, a year or a decade. If details of a per-

sonal character had been given, the thing for which they were called and which makes them conspicuous would be lost to sight. The meagerness of detail is a proof of higher designs than mere history or biography.

The thought that extends through the Bible is described in varying phraseology. Paul presents it in this way: "*According to the purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Eph., 3:11)." Peter puts it in still stronger light: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: *who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you* (I. Pet., 1:18-20)."

If we contemplate this purpose of redemption as extending from eternity to eternity, and bear in mind that the whole Bible is but the broadening or unfolding of this one thought, and that individuals, families, tribes and nations played a part only in reference to the final good of the whole race of man, everything will be clearer.

Look again at the line beginning in the morning of time and extending down the ages; take your pencil and mark the periods of development as I shall give them to you:

### **1. The Beginning of Creation.**

Creation began and was carried forward to its consummation before time began to be measured. Indeed

the measurement of time is the adaptation of eternity to the conception of man. We begin to *count time or measure time* from the creation of Adam (Gen., 1:1-31; 5:1-3).

## 2. The Edenic Period.

Mark this period on the line of time as indefinite or unknown, as it cannot be determined how long the first pair remained in the garden. It is probable that they were there considerably over a century, for Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth, his third son whose name is mentioned, was born (Gen., 4:25, 26; 5:1-3).

## 3. The Ante-diluvian Period.

This period, including the Edenic period, extends from the beginning of recorded time up to the flood, a period of one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years (Gen., 5: 1-31). You can subdivide this period as you choose, but at the start put in only what you can easily and distinctly remember.

*In the early part of this period we find the first intimation of a coming Deliverer* (Gen., 3:14, 15).

## 4. The Post-diluvian Period.

This period extends from the flood to the exodus, a period of eight hundred and fifty-seven years. Mark it down. This period is characterized by some momentous events. You can mark them on the line of time as I name them:

1. The birth of Abraham, three hundred and fifty-two years after the flood (Gen., 11:1-32; 12:1-3; Acts, 7:1-4).

2. The call of Abraham and the giving of the two great promises (Gen., 12:1-3).

3. The renewal of the promise to Isaac, the son of promise (Gen., 26:1-5).

4. The renewing of the promises to Jacob, Isaac's son and Abraham's grandson (Gen., 28:10-15).

5. The descent of Jacob into Egypt, two hundred and fifteen years after Abraham began his sojourn in Canaan (Gen., 12:1-4; 20:5; 25:26; 47:8, 9).

6. The birth of Moses, two thousand four hundred and thirty-three years after the creation of Adam (Gen., 5:3-32; 11:10-31; 12:1-4; 21:5; 25:26; 41:46, 53, 54; 47:8, 9; 50:26; Ex., 7:7).

7. The departure of Israel from Egypt eighty years after the birth of Moses (Ex., 7:7; 12:41, 42).

*By the call or predestination of Abraham and his family unto the development of the purpose of God all other nations were left to themselves.* Study Gen., 3:13, 14; Eph., 2:10-12.

### **5. The Period of Israel's Supremacy Began With the Exodus.**

During the fifteen hundred years that followed, up to the death of Jesus, the Hebrews, and they only, were the receivers of the law of God. Some of the most important events of this period were:

1. The proclamation of the law from Mt. Sinai (Ex., 20:1-17).

2. The erection of the tabernacle and the descent of the glory of the Lord (Ex., 40:1-38).



3. The death and burial of Moses (Deut., 34: 1-8).
4. Invasion and conquest of the land of Canaan (Josh., 1: 1-9; 23: 1-6).
5. Period of the Judges (Judg., 2: 16).
6. Birth of Samuel the prophet (I. Sam., 1: 1-28; Acts, 3: 24).
7. Establishment of the Kingdom of Israel (I. Sam., 10: 1-27).
8. Elevation of David to the throne of Israel (II. Sam., 5: 1-3).
9. Dedication of Solomon's temple (I. Kings, 8: 1-66).
10. Revolt of the ten tribes and the elevation of Rehoboam to the throne of Israel (I. Kings, 12: 19-33).
11. The ten tribes carried away into Assyrian captivity (II. Kings, 18: 9-12).
12. The Babylonish captivity (II. Kings, 25: 1-30).
13. Return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra, 1: 1-11; 6: 13-22).
14. Malachi the last of the Hebrew prophets (Mal., 1: 1).
15. Birth of John, who became the baptizer (Luke, 1: 57-80).
16. Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (Matt., 2: 1).
17. The death of Jesus for the sins of the whole world (Matt., 26: 28; Heb., 2: 9).

**6. The period of the gospel, beginning at the Cross, though not officially and formally announced until the day of Pentecost.**

This period extends down to the end of the world and includes the mightiest events in time.

1. Announcement of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave (Matt., 28: 1-7).

2. The inauguration of the Kingdom of Christ by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts, 2: 1-42).

3. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts, 9: 1-18).

4. The conversion of Cornelius and his household to Christ, which was the beginning of the gospel among the Gentiles (Acts, 10: 1-48).

5. The formal rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews (Acts, 13: 46).

6. The martyrdom of the Apostle Paul (II. Tim., 4: 1-8).

7. The banishment of the Apostle John to the Isle of Patmos (Rev., 1: 9).

8. The time of the fulness of the opportunity of the Gentiles (Rom., 11: 25).

9. The conversion of Israel to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rev., 7: 1-8).

10. The inauguration of the millennium by the binding of Satan (Rev., 20: 1-3).

11. The apostasy following the millenium, which is to last but a little time (Rev., 20: 7-10).

12. The coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, followed by the judgment day (Rev., 20: 11-15).

13. Eternity.

Now look down on the line and fix each subdivision of time clearly in your mind. Rub the line out and try to see it with your mind.

What do you see at the beginning?

“Eternity.”

What do you see at the end?

“Eternity” again.

Look again! What do you see as the central point of time as it is measured to us?

The Cross of Jesus Christ.

If you will keep the thought in mind that time is length, or extension from eternity to eternity, and fix the chief events in the Bible on the line, it will be easy to remember them, and also the place and relation of the less important events. Try to store away your information in an orderly manner. Let me test you somewhat on this point?

Was the death of Stephen before or after the Crucifixion?

You promptly answer:

“It was after the Crucifixion.”

Why did you so answer this question? There can be but one answer:

You learned that way.

You must get away from the idea that the Bible is simply a book, printed on paper and bound in leather.

It is a map of the human heart, the chart of time. Fix that thought in your mind and then as you learn the

facts you will know just where to place them, and you will never be guilty of quoting from Moses and giving credit to Paul, or of quoting from Paul and giving credit to Job!

The main line if well established will enable you to run a thought train through from the first station, stopping at all the stations on the line, to the Grand Union Station in the New Jerusalem. As you get more experience you can establish new stations on the line and you will soon become able to run your train in one direction as well as another.

In order to do this you must make up your mind to one most important thing, and for fear you may forget it I will put it in Italics, and I want you to pause long enough to take it in :

*You must learn or do one thing at a time.*

Did you ever observe that Paul lays down a rule similar to this? Here it is: "But this one thing I do (Phil., 3: 13)." You cannot estimate your possibilities in gaining Bible knowledge and remembering it if you are willing to take one thing at a time and make yourself the master of it. If you slip rapidly from one thing to another you may enjoy some mental stimulation while doing it, but you will never be able to learn anything in an absolute sense. The human mind cannot learn or take a clear impression of more than one thing at a time. The Bible is no easier nor more difficult than any other book. Its plan and design are addressed to our physical senses and

intellectual faculties exactly as any other book is addressed to them.

So much for the plan of the Bible; I must proceed to the unfolding of its design. Early in the morning of the race, man sinned grievously against his Maker and He immediately set out to redeem him. The Bible presents to our minds the unfolding of His plan, showing that inasmuch as it is for man that it shall be revealed through him, and incidentally it demonstrates that the things of which we acknowledge ourselves in need have been done by men as infirm as we recognize ourselves to be. As soon as God began to reveal His will He began to demonstrate that it can be done.

I realize that it is my duty to bring the first I have to the Lord, and I open my Bible and find that Abel did that almost in the morning of history, and, though dead many thousand years, he still speaks to men (Gen., 4: 1-5; Heb., 11: 4).

I realize that I ought to walk with God, but I find it hard to do it because humanly speaking it seems impossible for a poor human being like I know myself to be; but I open my Bible and read that Enoch walked with God, and thereby obtained witness from God that it pleased Him (Gen., 5: 22-24; Heb., 11: 5).

I realize that I need to believe and fear God, and moved by faith in His power, willingness and faithfulness, go forward in obedience to Him when "naturally" the way seems dark. I open my Bible and I find that

Noah did this very thing when all the world was against him and when his own experience, observation and reason were against him; he heard the voice of God and doubted not what the end would be (Gen., 6:9-15; Heb., 11:7; I. Pet., 3:20-22).

I realize my great need of deeper faith in God; that I ought to take Him at His word even when I am utterly unable to see where He is leading me; that I ought to obey promptly even when it costs the earthly treasure that lies nearest my heart, but these things seem outside of the range of what human beings can do. I open my Bible and find that Abraham my father did all these things: When God commanded him to depart from his native land he went out not knowing where the Lord would lead him (Gen., 12:1; Heb., 11:8): when in his old age God told him to offer his only son, the heir of His promises, he obeyed promptly, believing that Jehovah could and would provide (Gen., 22:1-18); indeed he believed even against hope—that is, when everything natural seemed against it—that what God promised He would do (Rom., 4:18-21).

I greatly feel the need of shutting out the world and thus leading a quiet and peaceable life in my Christian home, but I find that it is difficult to do this for the world is on the outside and it has many voices and allurements. I open my Bible and I find that Isaac, the distinguished patriarch, predestinated of God to be an ancestor of the Messiah, led the life of a farmer and shepherd, and moved

from place to place in order to avoid trouble with his neighbors (Gen., 26: 1-23).

I greatly feel the need of more persistence and expectancy in prayer, but I like to see answers to my prayers at once, and I often feel tired in mind and body and almost conclude to give up, for it seems so hard to be faithful in discouragements; but I open the Bible and I read of Jacob—he whose early life was clouded by sin—in his long night of wrestling with the Lord at Peniel in mental and physical anguish, and I am inspired when I reflect that he was a man, only a man, indeed a very weak man, and my faith arises to the same sublime heights as the past, phantom-like, rises before me and as the realities of the future crowd it out of the range of vision, I tighten my grasp on the work and promise of God, and in the words of Jacob exclaim: *“I will not let thee go, except thou bless me (Gen., 32: 24-32).”*

I greatly feel the need of leading a life so pure, so holy, so God-like, that to me the thought of sin is sin, but there are many temptations of many kinds on every side of me, with the result that I often acknowledge myself weak where I ought to be strong. I open the Bible and I find that Joseph fled from temptation even when he knew that in doing so he headed toward the dungeon (Gen., 39: 7-20); he was humble and gave all honor to God (Gen., 41: 16); and he forgave his brethren when most men would have been tempted to punish them (Gen., 50: 15-21).

I am deeply anxious to be able to stop my ears to voices of the world and give my life unselfishly to the good of others, but I am ambitious and so many ways seem open to me to gratify my earthly aspirations, that I sometimes feel that a mere man can never do continually what I do in my most exalted moments, and I am therefore discouraged with myself; but I open my Bible and I read that Moses turned his back forever upon the glories and riches of Egypt, and for forty years unselfishly labored for others because, enabled to endure, "seeing Him who is invisible," he looked not to the earth for his reward (Heb., 11:23-29).

I am honestly trying to be courageous, but this is a world of discouragements; those from whom we expect much fail in the critical moment, and sometimes the way seems a little dark, and I hesitate for a moment, only a moment, thank God, to dare and do in the name of God, and submissively leave the results in His hands; but I open the Bible and read of that intrepid warrior, Joshua, a man to whom the Lord promised all the land he could put his foot upon (Josh., 1:1-3). I see him, as with sublime faith and undaunted he stands by the walls of Jericho and expects them to fall just because God had said they should (Josh., 6:1-24), and again I see him as in deepest earnestness he commands the sun and moon to stand still (Josh., 10:12-14), and I am helped to press on.

I endeavor to so adjust myself to the character and will of God that I may sustain such a relation to Him,



that although I make my boasts in Him before the sons of men, my words may never fall to the ground, but naturally it seems impossible for me, a weak man, to do this, but I open my Bible and read of Samuel, who was *a man*. "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground (I. Sam., 3: 19)."

It is the one overshadowing desire of my life to be like unto my Maker in all things, but I am so weak, my steps are so uncertain and my mind is so prone to wander, that it seems next to impossible while here to reach unto the desire of my heart, but I open the Bible and read that David, *a man* with earthly passions and ambitions, was at one time a man after God's own heart, and thus I am inspired to loftier aims (Acts, 13: 22).

I seek after wisdom as the greatest earthly good; I keep my heart set on it to the best of my ability; I am a man only, only a man, weak, vacillating, unworthy, and the world has so many foolish voices that I am often tempted to turn aside unto vanity, and thus I am discouraged and hindered, and the object so dear to my heart seems to recede as I think I advance, and mock me in my foolishness; but I open my Bible and I am inspired to stronger effort to read that Solomon, *a man*, cast away all other earthly ambitions, as he thought, and chose wisdom, and God gave it to him liberally, and with it the promise of riches, honor and long life (I. Kings, 3: 3-15).

I deeply realize that the world, outside of Christ, is

perishing; that I am a debtor to all men in proportion to my means and talent, and that my chance of salvation hangs on my efforts to save others. In view of this I wish to forget myself entirely and trust God for my temporal supplies from day to day, and thus be ready always to answer the Lord's call for volunteers; but I am only a man and it seems to me that this achievement is out of the range of human beings, yet I open the Bible and read that when Israel went astray Isaiah, *a man*, when the Lord called for volunteers, replied: "*Here am I; send me* (Isa., 6:8)."

I have a burning desire to be a courageous soldier of the cross, to be always willing and ready to show my colors, even when it is dangerous to do so, but I am only a man, and I find myself ready to put off unpleasant duties or put the responsibility on someone else, indeed, I can hardly see how a man with "like passions" could always be courageous and faithful, but I open the Bible and find encouragement when I read that John, the forerunner of Jesus, *a man*, had the courage to look Herod in the face and denounce his sins (Matt., 14: 1-11).

I have made up my mind that I will endeavor to give my body and all its members, or senses, and my mind with all its faculties, as a living and perpetual honor or service to God, but when I view the past and see how often I have failed to come up to even my own ideal, which must be imperfect at best, and when I look around me and see the disciples of life in the mad rush for wealth,

when I see them doing a thousand times more to "lay up" money for relatives who will waste it in riotous living, than they are to lay up treasures and thus be rich toward God, I am forced to the conclusion that a man, a mere man, can never hope to be unselfish in this world of self-seeking and greed, but I open my Bible and read of Paul, who acknowledged himself to be the possessor of all the lusts and passions that hinder me, and yet I see him abandon his nation and religion, which nearly broke his heart (Rom., 9: 1-5), and count every earthly thing but dross in order to please, revere and honor Christ (Phil., 1: 3-12), and then I resolve to try again and again!

I am schooling myself to believe with all my heart that the trials of this present time are for my good, that in the end I will see that they have strengthened my faith, confirmed my hope, and intensified my zeal, but I am only a man; and in hours of adversity and pain I am disposed to think that I am forsaken and that I will never see the sunshine of prosperity and the comforts of good health again, but I open my Bible and read that Job, *a man* like unto all other men, when his children and riches were all swept away in a day, was neither rebellious nor dismayed: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (Job, 1: 21, 22)."

Again I find it hard to endure temptation, for I am only a man, but I turn to the Bible and I read that Jesus was tempted in all points like as I am tempted, and that in trusting to His help, I can triumph, and my arm is strengthened for the battle (Heb., 4: 15).

*The Bible is designed to reveal God in Christ and the way of salvation in obedience to His will, also to show the reasonableness of His demands by demonstrating that everything that He requires of us can be done because it has already been done by other human beings whose faults were as great and numerous as our own.*

If Abel brought the first and best to the Lord, I can do it; if Enoch walked with God, I can walk with Him; if Noah served God in faith and fear when every voice of nature seemed one of discouragement, I can do likewise; if Abraham went on the promise of God and always trusted to Him to lead and provide, I can do it too; if Isaac could shut his ears to the world's voice and lead a quiet and peaceful life, I can do the same; if Jacob held on to the Lord until he prevailed and became a prince with both God and man, I can hope to do as much; if Moses threw away the glories and riches of Egypt and unselfishly gave his life to the emancipation of his kinsmen from bondage, I can unselfishly give my life to others if I will, and by God's grace I will! If Joshua could invade a strange land courageously, I can hope to invade some dark land holding aloft the torch of the gospel; if Samuel could so adjust his faith and character to his God that He

would not allow one of his words to fall to the ground, I can do the same; if David could be a man after God's own heart, I can grow into the same blessed character; if Solomon could choose wisdom and obtain it, I can attain to it if I will, and I will! If Isaiah could promptly answer the missionary call, I can answer it when it comes to me; if Paul could count every earthly thing but dross when compared to Christ, I can do it, and by God's grace I will!

*The Bible was written to show the boundless possibilities of men under the saving and uplifting power of Jesus Christ.*

## LESSON VI.

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### **How to Understand the Bible.**

When the Ethiopian officer was returning from Jerusalem in his chariot he was reading the Scriptures — the prophecy of Isaiah. Philip, an evangelist of the new covenant, approached him, inquiring :

“Understandest thou what thou readest?”

The great man was deeply interested, hence he replied :

“How can I except some man should guide me (Acts, 8: 30, 31) ?”

I have endeavored to open the way for you to ask for further guidance in the study of the sacred oracles, and in order to answer you fully, yet briefly, I will lay down a proposition and put it in italics, and I must insist that you remember it :

*The truth of the Sacred Scriptures involves the issues of life and death to the whole world, and in order to understand and remember them we must use all our physical senses and mental faculties, and use them in the manner ordained in the creation, and precisely as we would use these senses and faculties in trying to understand anything else.*

I am aware that this statement may be considered as an exaggeration by some, but I have demonstrated its truthfulness to myself and I think I can also convince you of its unexceptional truthfulness. Let me state the same truth in another form and perhaps the truth of it may become clearer: In endeavoring to learn and understand the Scriptures we must concentrate all our strength of mind and body on the task.

### **1. What Part Does Reading Play ?**

I will let John answer: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John, 20: 30, 31)." Why read? Jesus answers: "Let him that readeth understand (Mark, 13: 14)." Reading is both a physical and mental act. It must be a physical act first. Luke says of the ancient Bereans: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether those things were so (Acts, 17: 10, 11)." It requires strong effort, both physical and mental, to search, and this is necessary in order to understand the word of truth. Reading may be rapid, thoughtless, profitless, but search must be slow, thoughtful, and profitable. A man may read with great advantage if he does it with deliberation. In searching he must fix his eye and mind entirely on the object before him. In simply

reading we are apt to pass from one word, thought, object, to another so rapidly that the impression is apt to be a composite one, including the impressions made by the reading primarily and the impressions that they revive. Such impressions soon fade almost entirely from the memory, and the strongest effort to recall them is a failure. In searching or in reading slowly and thoughtfully the impressions are distinct, clear-cut and easily recalled by an effort of the will, and remembered. "How readeest thou?"

## 2. What Part Does the Seeing Play?

There is such a wealth and variety of passages on this point that it is difficult to make selection, hence I shall only select those that seem most appropriate. Before proceeding I draw attention to the fact that seeing is a double act; it is an act of the eye, also an act of the mind. Shall we pray David's prayer? God grant it: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law (Ps., 119:18)." Jesus declared that some men have an evil eye (Mark, 7:22). If your eye — your heart back of it — is evil you cannot see any good anywhere. Here is a general statement, the substance of which may be found in different places in the Bible: "Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; *and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive*: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes have they closed*; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted



and I should heal them (Isa., 6: 9, 10; Acts, 28: 26, 27.)” This passage carries a deep lesson without regard to its spiritual significance. It contains the reasons of a poor memory and the philosophy of mind-wandering, of which so many acknowledge themselves the helpless victims. What was the matter with the Hebrews in Isaiah’s day and Paul’s day? *They saw without perceiving.* God’s loving kindness passed before them, indeed they were the objects of His love. They saw with their eyes, but not with their hearts. Why? Simply because they were so engrossed with the things that perish that no clear impression could be made on the eye and thence on the mind — the centre of conscious knowing — and thus the exhibition of God’s goodness, to their memories was only a blur. The Christian is really a pilgrim; by birth and profession nothing to him on earth is real or enduring: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (II. Cor., 4: 18).” Here is a startling fact: if you will fix your eye and concentrate your mind as intently on the things of God as you do on your temporal affairs you will at once find out that your so-called “poor memory” is a good one. Hear the apostle Paul and do your best to follow him in his glorious flight: “*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the*

exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph., 1:18-23).” *Did you see with your mind's eye?* Try it again and again until you can hold your attention on it unwaveringly. In order to memorize and remember perfectly, you must first get the thought.

### **3. What Part Does the Hearing Play?**

Ask some one to read the foregoing slowly and distinctly, and note the effect. Fix your hearing intently on the sound, then each thought in its order. The effects are precisely the same. But this is not enough. We will look further. The Bible lays much stress on hearing: “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, *as thou hast heard and live?* Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know

that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him; *out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee*; and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire (Deut., 4: 33-36)." This is unquestionably a reference to the voice of God that shook the earth when He came down on Sinai (Heb., 12: 18-26). We are accustomed to say there is nothing comparable to the human voice, but think of the voice that shook Mt. Sinai, yea, the earth, and caused even Moses, that mighty man of God, to "exceedingly fear and quake!" An important reason is assigned why men shall hear: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken (Isa., 1: 2)." Again: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: *hear, and your soul shall live* (Isa., 55: 3)." Again: "*Hear, and understand* (Matt., 15: 10)." Again: "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom., 10: 17)." "Take heed how ye hear (Mark, 4: 24)." Why this command? Manifestly because there were, and are, many idle and indifferent hearers, and as the care with which we hear governs and measures the vividness of the impression, and therefore the permanence of the effect, it is easy to see the importance of the injunction. The careless and indifferent hearer is strikingly pictured by James: "But be ye doers of the word, and *not hearers* only, deceiving your own selves; for if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth

himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was (Jas., 1: 22-24).” The idle, the careless, the indifferent hearer catches glimpses of himself when he hears the gospel, but the impression being dim from the start, soon fades from memory. The parable of the sower (Matt., 13: 1-23) beautifully illustrates the different classes of hearers. The sower went forth to sow and he sowed as he went, apparently paying little attention to the kind of soil on which the seed fell. Some fell by the wayside and was used by the fowls for food; some fell on stony places and quickly germinated, but owing to the stones had no chance to grow, and therefore withered away; some fell among thorns, and although the soil was good, the thorns, which were already growing, had a start and choked it; and some fell on good ground and brought forth a harvest varying from thirty to a hundred fold, according to the soil. In each case the same good seed of the kingdom was sown, in each case the word was *heard*, but results varied according to — not simply the soil — but according to what was previously in the soil. Thus is it unto this day. One man hears the word with a farm in his mind, another with a store in his mind, and another with a railroad in his mind, and each, while he remembers astonishingly well the smallest details of this business, complains that he cannot remember the Bible. If you wish to remember a sermon, you must set about it in a business-like manner. Set your heart upon it. Divorce your attention from everything else. Fix

your hearing intensely on it, resist the disposition to wander, and you will soon find that it is as easy to remember the Bible as it is to remember anything else. The one golden key that unlocks its treasures is *concentrated, or focalized, or intensified attention.*

#### **4. What Part Does Believing Play?**

I shall first treat this proposition from the standpoint of the mind or understanding itself. If by reading, or seeing, or hearing, you are convinced that a thing is true, the very fact of acceptance is an aid to a more thorough understanding. By accepting the truths of the Bible we put ourselves on such terms of familiarity with it that it is easier to understand. It is self-evident that a believer can see infinitely more in it than the unbeliever. Why? Undoubtedly, because he puts himself in a seeing — believing — attitude. It is impossible for the human mind to exhaust the treasures of this glorious book of books, but like mathematics, we must accept its fundamental principles in order to advance into its beauties. It is absolutely impossible to learn mathematics without learning the figures and their value, and it is equally impossible to learn the will of God without accepting its cardinal facts:

1. God is.
2. He is the Father of Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus arose triumphantly from the dead.
4. The Bible is the revelation of God in Christ.

I grant that a man may learn the Bible historically, that is, simply as a history, which is not a history if it is

not true, but the spirit, the unity and beauty of it are not unlocked to any save those who knock at its door with humble, believing hearts.

*The believer comes not to reason but to believe.*

The secrets of the Lord are with those who trust Him. Faithful acceptance puts a man in the line of promotion. The young Christian is not supposed to comprehend much, but faith must begin somewhere, and the Lord provides even for those who are weak in faith (Rom., 14: 1). Job's testimony is appropriate here: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and *to depart from evil is understanding* (Job, 28: 28)." David testifies: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: *a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; his praise endureth forever* (Ps., 111: 10)." Solomon puts himself in line with the others by declaring: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and *a knowledge of the holy is understanding* (Prov., 10: 10)." It is indisputably true that an act repeated produces a tendency to do it again, and also in the same degree destroys the resistance of unfavorable influences. An act done repeatedly produces a habit. Put yourself in the line of habitually believing all the things that are written (I. Cor., 13: 7.) At first, difficulties may confront you, but they cannot last. It is a fact that the men of God who have made this world worth living in have devoutly believed that God had spoken to them. I mention Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Peter, John and Paul in Bible times. Who are

the men who are turning this world into a garden of delights to-day?' I answer: *Those who, when they open their Bibles, believe with all their hearts that God is speaking to them.* It is easy to see that a man who approaches the Bible in this condition of mind will learn and remember. What is faith, or belief? In the general sense it is the assent of the mind to the truth, but it is more. It is defined by John as accepting the testimony of Jesus as true (John, 3: 33). It is defined by Paul as believing that what God has promised He is able to do (Rom., 4: 18-21), also as a confident expectation, or firm persuasion, with respect to the things not seen, yet hoped for (Heb., 11: 1). But faith is more than this: it is that temper of the soul that always yields promptly to the will and power of God as He reveals Himself to us as we read and study His word. Faith is more still: *it is the fixing of the mind intently upon the word of God*, and whatever does this, undoubtedly, helps both the understanding and the memory.

### **5. What Part Does the Memory Play?**

In order to answer this question successfully it will be necessary to find out what memory is. What do we mean by the word? I answer that it means that power of the mind that reviews or recalls and recognizes the impressions that have been previously made upon it. When I use the word "recognize" I mean that former impressions are recognized in varying degrees of distinctness, measured by the vividness or intensity of the original impression. Memory recalls by the force of will, or by

the suggestion of something that has been associated with the things remembered, things that have been lost to consciousness from a moment to a lifetime. What is the understanding? It is the power of the mind to reason or weigh and pass judgment. It is easy to see that understanding is next to impossible without the aid of memory. If I submit a proposition to you and you are absolutely without memory, which means that you cannot call up a single precedent, fact of history, or personal experience, you will be unable to grasp it or arrive at any reliable conclusion. As to the Bible, you can see without effort that those who took part in its most dramatic scenes would certainly remember them very clearly. Is it possible for us to so grasp the thoughts that we can, in a great degree, recall them and see them as the originals saw them? Let me show you how important memory is to us in our efforts to comprehend the teachings of the Bible. I submit a difficult passage for your consideration. You look it over, and although you have read the Bible all your life, you cannot recall a single fact or passage, and it would be impossible for you to explain the passage; but suppose you are able without a moment's warning to recall facts and passages from all parts of the Bible, the result would be different. For your own good, therefore, and the good of others with whom you come in contact, it is absolutely necessary for you to so read, and to so make the truth a part of your own experience that you can easily and promptly recall it. This can be done for the simple reason



that it is *required* of us, and God does not require us to do impossible things: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; *by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory*"—or hold fast—"what I preached unto you (I. Cor., 15: 1-5)." Hear Paul again: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, *lest at any time we should let them slip* (Heb., 2: 1)." The churches of Galatia had done this — forgotten the gospel — when Paul wrote his Epistle, hence his most pathetic and searching exhortation: "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you (Gal., 4: 19)." Both of Peter's epistles are appeals to the memory: "I will not be negligent to *put you always in remembrance* of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this present tabernacle, *to stir you up by putting you in remembrance* (II. Pet., 1: 12, 13)." Again: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which *I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and by the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior (II. Pet., 3: 1, 2)."

We need to be constantly reminded of the obligations that press upon us; in other words to have our minds or memories constantly refreshed. If the first impression is clear and full it will be easy to remember in detail as well

as in substance. Christ is to abide with us or dwell in us (John, 14:21; 15:7). Personally He is in heaven, but He dwells in us in proportion as we learn His will, imbibe His spirit, and make our lives like unto His own: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love*, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph., 3:16-19)." Here we are brought face to face with our privileges as sons and daughters of God. Shall we cast them away by inattention? God forbid.

What are the three great facts of history? Beyond a doubt, the *death, burial and resurrection of Jesus*. By these mighty truths we are saved *if we keep them in memory*. How important a good memory must be, and how easy to remember anything on which we set our hearts! Jesus Christ knew men, knew how listless, how heedless, and how prone to wander we are, hence He provides for the constant refreshing of our memories that we may be kept in His love:

1. By reading (I. Tim., 4:13).
2. By preaching (II. Tim., 4:1-5).
3. By exhortation (Heb., 10:25).
4. By the Lord's Supper (Matt., 26:26-20; I. Cor., 11:18-29).

5. By Christian baptism unto His name (Rom., 6: 1-6).

Over the first is written in letters of gold: "*This do in remembrance of me*, and in the second we see again and again His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

A good memory is more than rubies and diamonds — you can have it and the price is in your own hands — *good attention!*

### **6. What Part Does the Conscience Play?**

First of all, what is the conscience? It is hard to give a simple and yet comprehensive definition, but I think the following will be clear to you: The conscience is the power of the mind by which it decides on what is right and what is wrong, and adjusts its acts accordingly. The Scriptures make its work clear: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, *and of a good conscience*, and of faith unfeigned (I. Tim., 1:5)." Again: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (I. Tim., 3:9)." Now if conscience decides the question of right and wrong, it must be seen that when conscience decides in favor of the truth it must greatly aid the understanding. Keep your conscience in line with the character and truth of Jesus, and then bear in mind that it is never safe to go against its decisions.

### **7. What Part Does Testing it Play?**

Can a man put the Bible to the test for himself and then know for himself whether or not it is true, and will this test help him to understand its teachings? Undoubt-

edly. Where is the proof? I answer by observing that human beings have this right and privilege with respect to all other things, and the Bible appeals to the same organs of sense and the same mental faculties that are brought into use in the examination, understanding and elucidation of anything else. A physician *knows* a remedy is good because he has put it to repeated and severe tests. A mathematician *knows* the truthfulness of a proposition because he has demonstrated it in practical affairs. The mind knows its own acts, and everything in the domain of human knowledge has been learned by men who have put it to the test. All present knowledge, in whatever domain, is but the result of the efforts of men, who by trying have learned — *know things*. *We not only know, but we know that we know* (I. Jno., 2: 3) ! It is said that the Bible contains twenty thousand promises. I never counted them, but I have no doubt that it is true. If a man puts one, two, three, to the test, and is profoundly convinced that they are true, it will certainly help him to understand the others, for the promises are all closely related.

A backwoods preacher applied for admission into Conference. He was, of course, required to submit to an examination. The first question was supposed by the examiner to be hard enough to test the applicant's intellectual powers:

“What proof can you give of the divinity of Jesus Christ?”

The preacher hesitated a moment, and then as his eyes filled with tears, he brought his clenched fists down upon the table and made the building roar with the simple words:

*"He saved my soul!"*

An ignorant man, in the great city of Philadelphia, was engaged in his usual business of sawing wood, when he was approached by a learned physician who inquired of him:

"Do you know who is the mayor of Philadelphia?"

The man answered respectfully:

"No;" and sawed on.

"Do you know who is the alderman of this ward?"

The man looked up from his task, with heaven shining in his face, and said triumphantly:

*"I do not, but I know Jesus Christ; and I know He is my Redeemer!"*

It is often urged that we must "take the religion of Jesus on faith." This is only a half truth; we can test it in the same way that we must test anything that comes to us before we can really know it.

Jesus, in giving His last great commission, commanded His apostles to preach the gospel to the whole creation, adding the statement:

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark, 16: 15, 16)."*

I have put this proposition to the test, and if the human mind is capable of knowing anything, I know that

it is true. I have tried hundreds and thousands of the promises, and they are just as true to me as my knowledge of light, life, heat, cold, sunshine, darkness, thirst, hunger, or mathematics. We come into the world absolutely without knowledge of these things, but we learn and know by putting them to the test.

*We really know only what we have tried.*

Fortunately, we do not have to take the promises one by one, but as they all point to Jesus, we can test Him and then know *Truth*, and then *trust* the promises even before we have *tried* them. If you master the fundamental propositions of moral or mental science, or history, or language, it is easy to learn the details afterwards. Jesus claims that He has power on earth to forgive sin (Matt., 9: 1-6). Those who have tried it have said that it is so, and rather than deny it have laid down their lives.

*Millions of men and women have put His promises to the test, and have said in life and death that they are true, and no man has yet tried Him and all His promises and then declared in the presence of death that they are not true.*

I deliberately lay down this proposition: You cannot know anything physically, intellectually, or spiritually, save by experience, and the same laws that govern our physical and intellectual quests for knowledge, govern us in spiritual things. If you want to *know* that water quenches thirst, *drink it*; if you want to *know* that  $2+4=6$ , *add them*; if you want to *know* that God rewards the obedient, *obey Him!*

Do the Scriptures bear me out in this statement? I shall let them speak briefly for themselves: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; *and all these things shall be added unto you* (Matt., 6: 33)." Again: "*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself* (Jno., 7: 16)." Again: "I am the light of the world; *he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life* (Jno., 8: 12)."

### **8. What Part Does Christian Growth Play?**

How much *must* a man *believe* before he can begin to *know*? In other words, what must a man *believe* before he begins to obey in order to *know*? Faith deals with Jesus. Is He the Son of God? Did He die for you according to the Scriptures? Was He raised again for your justification? If you can answer these questions with a hearty affirmative, you are ready to begin to obey, but at the start you are only a babe, and in order to grow must have food and exercise (I. Cor., 3: 1-3; Heb., 5: 14). Mental food and exercise must of necessity help the understanding, hence the exhortation: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to whom be glory both now and forever. Amen (II. Pet., 3: 18)."

### **9. What Part Do the Promises Play?**

Peter answers: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godli-

ness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world through lust* (II. Pet., 1: 3, 4).” God’s promises bind us to Him, and whatever binds us to Him or fixes our wandering hearts on Him certainly helps us to understand Him. His promises are of two kinds:

1. Those that pertain to the present life.
2. Those that pertain to the future life.

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come (I. Tim., 4: 8).”

If we can bring ourselves to realize God’s care in respect to temporal as well as spiritual things, the things of a material character that have hindered us so long, will hinder our understanding no more.

### **10. What Part Do Trials Play?**

We are in our Father’s school. He has three methods of teaching us:

1. He speaks to us through the Bible.
2. He speaks to us through His providence.
3. He speaks to us through trials or chastisements.

In the Bible He speaks the same words to us all: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and



my burden is light (Matt., 11:28-30)." In providence He speaks to us according to our faith; in other words, He provides for us up to the measure of our faith: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John, 15:7)." In our trials He speaks to us according to our individual necessities: "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* (II. Cor., 4:17)." Again: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (I. Pet., 4:12, 13). Again: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish you, strengthen you, settle you (I. Pet., 5:10)."

Trials lift our minds from earth and fix them on the Source of all consolation, and are therefore helpful to us in understanding the oracles of God.

### **11. What Part Does Meditation Play?**

What is meditation? Are we required to meditate on the Holy Scriptures? In answer to the first question I reply that meditation is the concentration of the mind upon the word of God. In meditation, memory, imagination and reason, each play a part. Meditation is impossible without previous knowledge. In meditation, memory re-

calls and recognizes previous impressions; imagination combines, re-combines and invents, and reason compares and draws conclusions. Meditation is exceedingly profitable, both mentally and spiritually, providing it does not become a reverie or a phantasy in which nothing is recognizable. *There is great danger of mind-wandering in meditation.* The only way to cure mind-wandering is to begin with the attention: get a distinct impression of the subject, and when you call it up, fix your mind upon it; shut out everything else. If you catch yourself wandering, go back to the starting point, and by the most powerful effort you are capable of making, shut out the world and try again. Keep your mind on the main line, do not turn aside after anything. You will probably find the task a difficult one, but after practice you will find the effort beneficial and successful, *and a perfect remedy for bad thoughts and mind-wandering.* Be persistent in your practice and you will find it a great benefit to you spiritually. Does meditation help the understanding? Unmistakably, for meditation is nothing more or less than strong mental effort along a given line. Repetition is beneficial until it becomes mechanical, then it is not. Do not let meditation drift into mere repetition. Make it too intense, too deep, too serious for that. I submit the words of David: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; *but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Ps., 1: 1-3)." Again: "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day (Ps., 119: 97)." Hear Paul to the young preacher, but it applies also to you: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly unto them; that thy profiting may appear to all (I. Tim., 4: 15)." I suggest a line of meditation that will be very helpful to you, but let me urge you not to try to take in too much at the beginning, and remember that meditation has its basis in what has been previously learned. Begin by learning all you can about Jesus. I suggest that after you get the facts thoroughly impressed on your mind, that, after mentally reviewing the ground of your knowledge, you give your imagination a chance.

1. He is the Counsellor (Isa., 9: 6).
2. He is the Prince of Peace (Isa., 9: 6).
3. He is Emmanuel — that is, God with us (Isa., 7: 14; Matt., 1: 23).
4. He is Jesus — that is, my Savior (Matt., 1: 21).
5. He is the light of the world — my light (Jno., 8: 12; I. Jno., 1: 7).
6. He is the life of men — my life (Jno., 1: 4; 10: 10; I. Jno., 1: 1-7).
7. He is the great teacher — my teacher (Matt., 7: 28, 29).
8. He is the friend of publicans and sinners — my friend (Luke, 15: 1, 2).

9. He is the Son of God, God's only Son, the Son of His love (Matt., 3: 13-17; 17: 1-5; Col., 1: 3).

10. He is the great Emancipator — He set me free (Isa., 61: 1-3; Jno., 8: 33-36).

11. He is the brother of the whole race of men — my brother (Matt., 12: 46-50; Rom., 8: 16, 17).

12. He is the great offering for sin — my propitiation (Isa., 53: 1-12; I. Jno., 2: 1, 2).

13. He is the prince of life — the author and finisher of the faith (Acts, 3: 15; Heb., 12: 2).

14. He is the high priest of the house of God — my priest (Heb., 2: 16-18; 3: 6; 4: 14-16; 7: 25-28).

15. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords — my King, my Lord (Acts, 2: 36; I. Tim., 6: 15, 16; Rev., 19: 16).

16. He is the intercessor for the saints — my intercessor (Rom., 8: 26, 27; Heb., 7: 25).

17. He is the ransom and mediator of men — my ransom and mediator (Matt., 20: 28; I. Tim., 2: 5, 6).

18. He is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of His person — the bright and morning star (Heb., 1: 1-3; Rev., 1: 12-16; 22: 16).

19. He is the Judge of all the earth — my Judge; before Him I must stand and render account for my stewardship (Matt., 25: 31-46. Acts, 17: 31; II., Cor., 5: 10).

I have given you only a meagre outline of our Redeemer's office, glory and saving power. It is meant to be suggestive.

*Begin at the first and try to fix each thought in your mind: and then it will be easy to get the words.*

After fixing the thoughts and words in your mind so you can easily recall them, you can meditate upon them at pleasure and keep your mind upon Him indefinitely. Do not be satisfied with this outline. Read for yourself, and thus broaden your views. Read but little at a time. The moment your mind begins to wander, come back to the subject with, and by the exercise of, your will. The very moment you find yourself getting tired, close your Bible and go over the thoughts, not the words, which you have read.

*Think of the things.*

If anything is indistinct, open your book, and set your eyes and mind upon it until it becomes a reality.

*If you see the truth as it is, you are so made that you can never forget it.*

I am satisfied that the majority of Bible readers try to cover too much territory. In my early ministry I made up my mind to "read the Bible through" and I did it, more to carry out my resolution, perhaps, than anything else. I have not at my command at this moment one thought that I can positively identify as the result of that reading. I have never read it through since, *but I have read it from the depths of my soul!* Do not read so fast. Do not pass over a single thought without getting a firm grasp upon it. In your readings, after having gone hurriedly over three or four chapters, you have closed the book with a

degree of exhilaration and the feeling that you have been somewhere, but in an hour afterward you could not, perhaps, recall vividly a single thought. It is very much as if you should stand on some mountain lifted high above its fellows and turn rapidly around, and then try to remember the landscape! Why could you not do it? Simply because the view was so rapid, and the attention, and consequent impression so indistinct, that *the mind did not receive and record a single individual impression.*

*One thought positively and distinctly recorded in the mind is worth incomparably more than a volume about which you in reality know nothing.*

Meditation is repetition. It is the recalling of previous impressions, and re-combining and re-coloring them by the imagination, and therefore it helps us to understand and remember the word of God.

### **12. What Part Does Prayer Play?**

I can best answer this question by giving you a general Scriptural view of prayer. Prayer is making our wants known to God, asking for an answer in harmony with the will of God.

1. Prayer must come out of a pure heart: "Who shall ascend into the hill of Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully: he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation (Ps., 24: 3-5)." Solomon is exceedingly forcible on this point:

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Prov., 28:9).” Jesus speaks in the same tone: *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt., 5:8).”* Paul’s testimony agrees with the others: “I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (I. Tim., 2:8).”

*If the pure in heart see God and prayer is the fixing of the heart on Him, it must help us to understand Him and His word.*

2. Prayer must recognize the willingness and ability of the Lord to give: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened: or what man is there of you, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (Matt., 7:7-11)?*” Again: “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister (Heb., 6:10).”

*If God is able and willing to give, and the prayer of faith takes hold of Him, it must at least help us to understand the promises on which we base our petitions.*

3. Prayer must be persistent. At first thought this

proposition may seem somewhat startling, but the Scriptures abundantly bear me out in it. Two things are involved in the prayer of faith beyond a doubt — God's willingness and ability to give; He is willing, always willing, and our persistent asking cannot make Him more willing or more able — and our ability to receive and use His blessings. Hear Jesus: "*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him* (Matt., 6:8)." Hear Him again: "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, *Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth*; and I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him* (Luke, 11:5-13)." Hear Him once again:



“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, *Hear what the unjust judge saith: and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily* (Luke, 18: 1-8).” Hear Paul: “Pray without ceasing (I. Thess., 5: 17).”

*Prayer is the persistent fixing or concentrating of the mind on God and His promises, and if there is anything in hard study that benefits the understanding, prayer must also help it. I can testify out of an abundant experience that it does help. You may know by putting it to the test.*

4. Prayer must be in faith — faith in God, hope in His promises. Jesus laid down a rule in his conversation with the centurion which is good even unto this day: “As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee (Matt., 8: 1-13).” And again in conversing with the man whose son was sorely afflicted: “If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth (Mark, 9: 17-23).” Again: “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive (Matt., 21: 22).” Finally:

“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God (Jno., 11:40)?” Faith unlocks the store-house of wisdom, sanctification and eternal redemption, also everything needed for the life that now is.

*Jesus has lost none of the power and sympathy which He exhibited while on earth. Prayer in faith takes hold of Him, and thus opens our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures.*

5. Prayer must be, and is, in the name of Jesus Christ: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (Jno., 15:7).” Again: “And whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. *If ye will ask anything in my name I will do it* (Jno., 14:13, 14).”

*The name of Jesus is above every name both in heaven and on earth. Prayer focalizes the faith on Him as the only source of Life and help, and thus enables us to understand Him.*

6. Prayer must come from the obedient. Faith tempers the soul to the power and glory of God; obedience must bring the life into conformity to His will. *At the point where these two meet, successful prayer goes up!* Let us turn to the Scriptures: “Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (John, 9:31).” Again: “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, be-

cause we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight (I. Jno., 4: 22)."

*In prayer, believing prayer, faith and obedience — the two eyes of the soul — are fixed on God, and thus prayer aids us to understand Him.*

7. Prayer must rise out of an unselfish heart: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts* (Jas., 4: 1-3)."

*The scheme of redemption is based on absolute unselfishness. Prayer from an unselfish heart brings us into contact with its spirit and thus helps us to understand it.*

8. We must pray, relying upon the Holy Spirit to help us: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Rom., 8: 26, 27)."

I regard this as one of the most sublime passages in the word of God. I summarize the points preceding and in connection with this: God our Father knows our needs and is absolutely willing to give. Faith and obedience

open His store-houses, and in order that we may measure up to our glorious privileges as sons and daughters of God in bringing down on our heads, blessings both spiritual and temporal, He gives us the aid of the Holy Spirit who makes intercessions for us with an interest that is unutterable, and the aid of Jesus who perpetually intercedes for us according to God's will.

*Lord, teach me to pray!*

*Lord, open my eyes that I may see!*

*Lord, lead me, keep me, in thy perfect way!*

*Lord, give thy servant understanding in all things!*

### **13. What Part Does The Incarnation Play?**

This question is overwhelmingly important and I trust you will seriously consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things (II. Tim., 2:7). By the incarnation I mean that God's own Son entered a body of flesh and dwelt among men: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth (Jno., 1:14)." The whole Bible must be understood and interpreted in the light of this great event. You have endeavored to contemplate God as the first great Cause, but your mind has been utterly unable to do it. The self-existent and Eternal One cannot be grasped by the human mind, *but in Jesus the God-idea becomes objective and we can easily grasp Him.* The mind naturally and without exception deals with objects. We do not in reality think of words or remember words;

we remember objects. Test yourself. Here is a brief history of the scenes of your childhood. Read it, and you seem not to see the words at all; you see the objects, and you are a child again. You see the old home, your father, your mother, your brothers, your sisters, the yard where you used to play, the spring from which you used to drink, the red apples on the tree; you hear the birds as they almost split their throats in the cool morning in spring-time, and away in the east the grim old mountain just as it looked forty years ago rises before your eyes.

Nature's methods are the best; man was made to think objectively and God recognized this by bringing Himself objectively within the domain of human sense and understanding. "*We see Jesus* (Heb., 2:9)." Seeing Jesus we have understanding; and "we know that the Son of God is come, *and hath given us understanding*, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (I. Jno., 5:20)."

#### **14. What Part Does the Will Play ?**

Does it play any part? Is the will free? I answer that it plays a mighty part, and that it is free to choose, for two reasons:

1. We are conscious of freedom in the ordinary affairs of life, and the study of the Bible requires the exercise of precisely the same senses and faculties that we exercise every day in secular things. The same eyes, the same ears, the same nose, the same tongue, the same

nerves that bring us into living touch with the world around us are called into use in reading, understanding, and retaining the word of God. The same will, judgment, reason, memory, and imagination that keeps us in relation with the world of nature keeps us in touch with the world of revelation.

*We must approach the Bible precisely as we would approach any other book or thing.*

2. The Bible teaches plainly and repeatedly that man can and does exercise his will. David testifies: "Thy people shall be *willing* in the day of thy power (Ps., 110:3)." Jesus testifies: "And ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life (Jno., 5:40)." Again: "*And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely* (Rev., 22:17)."

If you are *unwilling* to learn, no person or power on earth can teach you; if you are *willing* and choose to energetically *exercise your will in the right direction* no person or power on earth can hinder you.

The will holds the balances — which is worth most to you, slothfulness and ignorance, or diligence and knowledge?

*Your will, and your will only, can and must decide.*

### **15. What Part Does Attention Play?**

Attention is the key that unlocks the Bible to the understanding, but it does it in precisely the same way that it unlocks the secrets and blessings of any other book. Without it, reading, seeing, hearing, believing,

remembering, using the conscience advantageously, testing the promises, Christian growth, partaking of the Divine nature by the promises, learning through trials, meditation, prayer, taking hold of the incarnation, exercise by the will and understanding, therefore the will of God concerning us would be next to impossible. Every message of the Bible is so arranged, *objectively*, that it will fix and hold the attention steadily.

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON VII.

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### **How the Bible Views Man.**

If we fully understood ourselves, it would be infinitely easier for us to understand the Bible.

*The Bible was made for man — for me.*

From whence came the Bible? From whom came the Bible? Why came the Bible? To whom came the Bible? To whom does the Bible point us? To what does the Bible guide us?

From whence came I? From whom came I? Who am I? What am I? What do I? Whose am I? Whither do I go?

I can best answer these universal human questions by answering others that lie back of them:

Who is God?

What is God?

Who is Jesus?

What is Jesus?

The Bible speaks for itself in language that we can comprehend. I answer these four questions as if they were one, for Jesus and His Father are one (John, 17: 21).



"God is a Spirit (John, 4: 24)."

"God is love (I. John, 4: 8)."

"God is light (I. John, 1: 5)."

God knows (I. John, 21: 17; II. Cor., 12: 1-3).

God hears (John, 9: 31).

God smells (Gen., 8: 21).

God remembers (Jer., 31: 31-34; Heb., 8: 12).

God forgets (Isaiah, 65: 17).

God speaks (Acts, 9: 5).

God repents (Gen., 6: 5, 6).

God sees (I. Pet., 3: 12).

God thinks (Isaiah, 55: 8, 9).

God reasons (Isaiah, 1: 18).

God sympathizes (Ps., 34: 16-22).

God hates (Rev., 2: 1-6).

God loves (John, 3: 16).

God chooses (I. Pet., 2: 9).

God wills (II. Pet., 3: 9).

God has a mind (Rom., 11: 34).

What is man (Ps., 8: 4; Heb., 2: 6)? Can you tell me? This is the one question of the ages, but it only finds its full interpretation in the incarnation of the Word of God:

*"For we are his offspring (Acts, 17: 28)."*

*"Men which are made after the similitude of God (Jas., 3: 9)."*

*"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen., 1: 26)."*

In what respects is man like his Creator? I answer: In every respect, but only in degree. Sin has in many ways made us unlike God in the three-fold sense of body, mind and soul or life, but man has in one degree and another in him the similitude of God:

Man has a body (Gen., 2:7; Ecc., 12:7; Heb., 1:1-3).

Man has a spirit (I. Cor., 2:11).

Man has a soul (Matt., 16:26).

Man has a heart (Rom., 10:9, 10).

Man hears (Rom., 10:17).

Man sees (Acts, 26:18).

Man has an imagination (Gen., 6:5).

Man tastes (Ps., 34:8).

Man loves (John, 14:15).

Man thinks (II. Cor., 10:4, 5).

Man reasons (Isaiah, 1:18; Acts, 24:25).

Man forgets (Heb., 2:1-3; Jas., 1:25).

Man remembers (Ecc., 12:1).

Man wills (Rev., 22:17).

Man chooses (Josh., 24:15).

Man considers (Ezek., 18:28).

Man feels (Eph., 4:19).

Man believes (John, 20:29).

Man yields (Rom., 6:13).

Man knows (II. Pet., 2:20).

Man speaks (Eph., 4:15).

*But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II. Cor., 4:16)."*

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I. Thess., 5: 23)."

Man's existence is threefold:

1. *Physical existence.*
2. *Intellectual existence.*
3. *Spiritual existence.*

The three are all alike in at least one respect: they begin in almost absolute helplessness, and grow in proportion to the nutriment and exercise given. Physical existence is not dependent on either of the others. This is seen in the cases of infants, weak-minded persons and the mentally unbalanced. The intellectual existence is dependent in a large measure upon the physical. It is possible to have a sound mind in an unsound body, but a sound mind in a sound body is much to be preferred. Spiritual existence is the higher expression of the powers of both mind and body, and is dependent on them.

Man — I — can only learn through the senses. In order to know he must, and there can be no exception to this primary knowledge:

1. See.
2. Hear.
3. Smell.
4. Taste.
5. Feel.

If he, *the man inside of this body*, is duly impressed

through sight, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling until the impression is vivid, he can re-live his first experiences after the objects that originally impressed him have perished. Try it in these simple illustrations; shut your eyes and set your will on each thing as I mention it:

See! the red June apples on the tree in your father's yard.

Hear! the cow-bell in the evening as the gentle cows come home.

Smell! the fragrance of the roses in the June morning at your old home.

Taste! the preserves and pies that mother used to make.

Feel! the sharp pin that John Smith put in position for you in your place at the old school-house.

I live in this body, it is my house or tabernacle, and I learn through its senses; but after I learn in this way the preservation of the knowledge is not dependent upon the organs by which I obtained it.

This is forcibly illustrated in the case of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke, 16: 19-31). There was a time when the rich man knew nothing of Lazarus and Lazarus knew nothing of him, but they saw and knew each other, and even after they had passed into the future state the impressions made here were so positive that at the first glance they knew and recognized each other, and then how vividly each recalled his former life!

If the sense is impressed and the mind responds, thus

taking in a distinct impression, forgetfulness is impossible. It is a fact worthy of the most serious attention that in our earth life we store up a great treasury of impressions which can never be entirely forgotten. We sometimes imagine that we forget, but do we? Think: Are you not often startled by the recollection of a face, or a fact, or a truth, that you thought had been buried many years? I doubt not that ten thousand times ten thousand years from now, it matters not where you shall be, these things shall continue to present themselves with startling vividness at the door of your consciousness. It is of the utmost importance to you that you see that good things impress you deeply, and evil things not at all.

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON VIII.

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### **Attention and Memory.**

Every human being comes into this world absolutely helpless physically, and absolutely blank so far as ideas are concerned. Contrast Moses one day old and Moses entering the court of Egypt and demanding the release of his people; or contrast Paul one day old with Paul electrifying the Grecians on Mars' Hill with the gospel of Christ, and you must see and confess that, from the standpoint of knowledge, great changes took place in these men between birth and mature manhood. This raises an important and interesting question:

*How do we learn?*

I answer that there are some things that we are never conscious of learning, yet we are conscious of knowing them, although we cannot tell when they were learned. We cannot tell whether we grow into this knowledge or whether God intended that, passing a certain point in intellectual development, we should attain it without knowing how we did it. I will name three things:

1. *Knowledge, or consciousness of being.*
2. *Knowledge of time or duration.*

3. *Knowledge of space or extension.*

No one has ever been able to tell how we come into a knowledge of these things, but we do it without any effort on our part. This knowledge helps us greatly in attaining other knowledge.

Knowledge, in the ordinary meaning of the term, must be attained through the senses, that is we must:

1. *See a picture.*
2. *Hear a sound.*
3. *Smell an odor.*
4. *Taste a flavor.*
5. *Feel a surface.*

The great question with us is not simply, How do we learn, but how can we learn so as to be able to remember distinctly and readily? A few facts, truths, experiences, vividly remembered, are worth vastly more than a great storehouse of indistinct impressions. I shall begin with the child. Those who have had the care and responsibility of children will readily admit that they learn rapidly and remember without apparent difficulty. We can learn much from children. Indeed, I propose to have you, gray-haired and old, sit down at the feet of a little child and learn how to remember the Bible. This seems a little startling.

*How does the child learn and remember?*

I answer only in part now, but I will answer more fully as I advance: The child learns one thing at a time, and learns it well. This is your first lesson. Generally

you rush along the highways of knowledge at a rapid rate, and only catch a glimpse of things as you go by. The child has life before it, and takes plenty of time, but at first only a little time is needed for the reason that the mind is not pre-occupied, and therefore takes impressions quickly. Here is the baby; he does not possess a single idea; indeed, his mind is entirely blank. Let us watch him and study his growth. He opens his eyes and looks around about him. His mother watches his development for a few months, and he begins to come in touch with this strange world. After several months a cat comes in, and the mother calls, "Kitty," and day after day the cat comes and goes until baby becomes familiar with the *object* and *name* too.

*The child learns the object before it learns the name.*

Later it learns to associate the name and the object. The object was impressed on the mind through the eye, and the name was impressed on the mind by the sound to the ear. In this way the child's knowledge grows. Objects in every case come first, followed by the names. Take a child's stock of knowledge when it is two years old or even three years old, and its stock of objects and ideas is limited to a few familiar household things. As the baby grows its mother continues to call the things around the house by name; after a while the cat comes in and he says, "Kitty;" the family dog has been seen often, and the child grows familiar with the object, and following the example of its mother, it at last says "dog."



In like manner he learns to associate objects or things with the names he hears his mother use, and thus learns to say "mamma," "papa," "brother," "sister," "milk," "candy," and so on. It is utterly impossible to teach a baby without having an object before its eyes. Now suppose when the child is able to talk a little you should undertake to test its memory, by calling "Kitty!" "Kitty!" the child would look for the cat, or if you would call "papa!" "papa!" it would at once look for its father. The name of the object brings the object to the mind, or the appearance of the object suggests the name.

*It is natural for us to learn and think objectively.*

Knowledge acquired in childhood is always bright and easily revived, and we never get away from the objects that are impressed on the mind early in life, and even down to ripe old age the objects are vividly remembered, because the original impression was distinct. As the child grows, objects and names multiply through sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, until its vocabulary, as we term it, includes a vast number of words, or rather I should say, objects and the names of them.

*In the act we call recollection, the objects, though not present in the mind, are called up before their names are mentioned. Memory deals with the objects rather than names.*

This is readily seen in the fact that objects or things are the same the world over, but men arbitrarily call them by different names, according to the language they speak.

For example: my father's relation to me would not be altered by calling him by the name that expresses that relation to a Greek, a Frenchman, or an Italian. It is generally asserted that men think in language. I believe that you can demonstrate the fallacy of this statement by putting it to the test — you think in *objects*, that is, in the *things* arbitrarily named in language.

“Words are things.”— Mirabeau.

Yes, but only because they have “*things*” behind them. Do you know why a living language is always changing? Because living things are constantly changing. Old things pass away and new things appear. When the object passes away, the word is forgotten. A few years ago our country rang with the names of James A. Garfield and James G. Blaine. To-day these names are almost forgotten. Why is this? The *men* or *things* or *objects* they represent have gone from us forever, and now the country rings with new names, and is dominated by new men and forces. Men advance in knowledge, and as new objects come into our experiences, we coin new words to represent them to our senses and faculties.

*Thought is living, real, eternal. Language is changeable, arbitrary and ephemeral.*

We do not think in language; we think in objects, things. Countless ages before any language rang on human ears or dwelt on human tongue, God was. Countless ages before the angels sang at midnight to the Judean shepherds of His birth, the Word was. God is the same

being in all languages; Jesus the same loving friend and brother in every human tongue. The thought, *God is*, exists everywhere; no language can claim it as its own. The thought, *Jesus saves*, like sweetest music, is at home in every language spoken by men.

God can plan things before they exist. He showed Moses the tabernacle in the Mount before a single farthing had been contributed toward its erection (Heb., 8: 5). Man can do the same thing, but in every case the thing becomes objective to the mind. God made Moses "*see*" the tabernacle so plainly that when it was done he recognized it (Ex., 39: 43). An architect plans a building until, after he has committed it to paper, he can "*see*" the building without the aid of the plans.

Open your eyes and look at the great world of objects around you. Everything you see existed many centuries before it had an English name. Indeed, everything existed before it had any kind of a name in any tongue. After beasts and fowls had been created by the fiat of Jehovah, they were brought to Adam, who gave them their first names (Gen., 2: 18, 19). The lion, for example, existed separate from everything—"the king of beasts" before he had any name; but since the confounding of the tongue of man at Babel (Gen., 9: 1-9), he has been given a different name in every language, but he is the same king of beasts in them all.

See that tree! It existed before there was a man to behold it, or before it had any name. See that beautiful

squirrel jump from limb to limb! It frolicked before there was any human tongue to name it or any human eye to behold it. Hear that dog bark! there he sits by the root of the tree; see the expectancy in his face! He existed before there was any human ear to hear him bark or human tongue to give him a name. And what is more wonderful still, the whole scene can exist one day, one year, one century, or one million of years after it existed in fact.

*How? In the world of mind!*

Shut your eyes and exclude the world, and the scene stands before you as real as life, and yet you in reality never saw it with your eyes. You can describe it with the minuteness of an eye-witness, because it is simple and striking. *If you will make the effort in the same way, and think of the objects, and not the words, you can remember thirty objects as well as three.*

*God made you to learn and remember, and you can do both beyond a doubt.*

In efforts to remember, you do not try to recall the scenes as having existed in some remote time, but you make an effort to re-live the experience. You find it easy to remember things of which you were a witness, or in which you have been an important part. Examples:

Twelve years ago I came near being burned up in a hotel. The very mention of a hotel fire causes me to live again the experiences of that awful night. It concerned me. I could not forget it if I would.

Two years ago, the third of last February, we threw the doors of the School of the Evangelists open, and as the steamer plowed its way up the French Broad river and the young preachers from many States set their feet on God's little farm, and the College bell rang out its glorious welcome again and again, pledging its music to world-wide missions on the promises of God, I had a foretaste of heaven — all the men on earth and devils of the bottomless pit could not make me think otherwise. As I write, my heart beats faster and my eyes are filled with tears, and the scene is as real as life, although I am nearly a thousand miles from the scene, and many long months have passed away since the day. I cannot forget it. I expect to remember it after numberless years shall have passed.

*Things that powerfully impress us are remembered almost without effort.*

You can easily test yourself. Try to remember your childhood experiences — how vivid they are! I can see myself in a checked linsey dress, or in my first pair of white pants, or the day the boat sank, or when I cut my foot, or when I tangled the harness, or when I hung myself in the forks of a sapling, or when I fell out of the peach-tree, or when I built cornstalk mills, or when I went to grandfather's, or when I sat under the shade of a tree in the yard and my aged uncle showed me the differences in b, d, p, and q, or the scenes of my school days, or when I ran from the soldiers, or when father had to

leave us, or the wild tumult of joy that raged in my heart when I heard that the war was over, when my father bought me a copy of McGuffey's Second Reader — I was richer than a king! Oh, it is wonderful that after gray hairs creep to my temples I can be a child again! Thank God for memory!

Things in which others have taken part that come to us through the printed page or through the spoken oration or sermon are hard to remember, but I have discovered the secret of doing this:

*I make the experiences of others my own.*

You may say that this is too difficult for you; but you are mistaken; I do it, and *you* can do it. Examples:

I do not *read* of the flood simply; I *live* through it by the aid of the printed page. To me the flood did not take place over four thousand years ago, it takes place while I read. I help build the ark, see the animals and fowls go in, go in myself with Noah and his family, wait, then I hear the thunder roll, and the torrents roar, then I feel the wild thrill of joy as the ark rises on the bosom of the rushing flood. I stay with Noah until the waters are abated, and go out with him and make a new start. After reading in this manner and studying the flood objectively, it becomes so much like a personal experience that I can live through it again without the aid of the printed page.

I do not simply *read* of Abram's journeying from Ur to Canaan, I join the caravan and go with it. I bid fare-

well, with Abram and his family, to the loved ones left behind, and upon a camel's back I journey on until we come to Haran, and with the faithful son, I watch by the bedside of the aged father; help close his eyes, and lay him away to rest, his pilgrimage over, and turning from the new-made grave we hasten on to — I know not where, God has said go, and we go! At last one evening we pitch our tents and feed the camels and get ready for the evening meal, the stars creep out, and darkness comes on, and I hear the voice of God, the same voice we heard in Ur: "Unto thy seed will I give this land (Gen., 12:7)." I have lived and journeyed with Abram and his experience has become mine.

I do not simply *read* of Calvary; I am there! I see the Master coming bearing His cross and with Him the infuriated multitude. The sight is enough to make angels weep. He falls under the weight of the cross and it is placed upon the reluctant shoulders of another. I see Him nailed to the cross and suspended between two thieves. I see soldiers gamble for His garments, then sit by and watch. I read the superscription over His head. See the passers-by wag their heads and mock His anguish, and challenge Him to save Himself. Then the chief priests take up the cry and mock, and even the thieves do all they can to make His sufferings more intense. I see the sun hide behind the clouds and feel the darkness cast upon me. I hear the pleading voice of the penitent thief and the compassionate cry of the dying Redeemer. I

hear Him lament His forsaken condition. I hear Him ask John to care for His mother. I hear Him pray for His enemies. I hear Him commend Himself to God. I see Him die. I feel the earth tremble under my feet, and join the centurion in saying: "Truly this was the Son of God." I see the faithful women. I wait until the evening, and, in company with Joseph, go unto Pilate and beg for the privilege of giving Him decent burial. Getting permission we return to the cross and take Him tenderly down, and with broken hearts lay Him in the tomb.

*If you will put yourself in the writer's place you can almost make his experience your own.*

I testify that this can be done. I have done it. I do it every day. You can do it, but how? I answer:

**1. You must come to the task with a loving and believing heart.**

If you cannot do this you might as well give up the undertaking. You must be enthusiastic. A calm, cold, indifference will never, can never, open the store-house of truth and salvation.

**2. You must come with your mind made up to excel.**

Everything depends upon the proper exercise of the will. If you cannot *will to know* you need not aspire to excellence. "Where there is a will, there is a way," is just as true in the study of the Bible as in anything else.

Be patient — much time will be needed. Be systematic — set a time for the work and let nothing interfere.



### 3. Practice What You Learn.

This is of the utmost importance. With one truth learned, but not put into practice, you cannot hope to make much progress. Study with the supreme desire to know and to do the will of God, and do it just as fast as you learn it. I deliberately declare, that in my judgment nothing so helps us to understand the will of God and remember it, as to walk habitually with God. Keep yourself in the atmosphere of heavenly things, and you will find it easy to receive and enjoy and remember the heavenly message.

### 4. Attention.

All other things are preparatory to this, and all results depend on attention. A good understanding and a good memory can be rendered practically useless by inattention. Attention is of two kinds:

1. *Willing attention.*
2. *Unwilling attention.*

You can easily understand me when I say we can give attention to some things almost without effort, while in other cases we must compel attention by the exercise of the will.

Please test yourself, and I believe you will find you are suffering from poor attention, and mind-wandering as a result, rather than from a poor memory. I insist that God gave you — gives every man and woman — a good memory, and that it is good yet. Step to your door and look in any direction you like. Look closely. Now sit

down and tell me what you saw. You are surprised that you saw so little, and if the scene had not been a familiar one you could not assert positively that you saw anything.

*Listen: Memory calls up, or deals with, or recognizes, previous impressions.*

Can you not see that the trouble with your memory is that you have not been giving it anything to do? A man who passes through the country at the rate of forty miles an hour, may be exhilarated or even intoxicated with the scenes through which he passes, but when at the end of his journey he tries to recall it, behold, it is all a dream. He cannot remember anything distinctly, because, forsooth, he did not receive one distinct impression. That is precisely the way most people read the oracles of God, and then they honestly lay the blame on their "wretched memories." Good attention is not necessarily a gift of nature. I think it is the result of the way we use ourselves. I can say the same of poor attention. I testify out of my own experience. I do not deny that I am sometimes a victim of mind-wandering as a result of inattention, but I have a certain cure in the exercise of my will. You need not say that you cannot exercise your will, for your neighbor with whom you argued about politics last week, says you are the most stubborn man in the township. Your will is all right. You need to school it in the right direction. It is recorded of John C. Calhoun, the distinguished statesman, that he could concentrate his mind — attention — on anything that he chose, and as

long as he chose. As I am giving in detail my own methods the reader will pardon a rather more personal allusion: By the force of will I can do three things at once. Last Spring I was writing a book, or rather dictating it to an amanuensis, and, without breaking seriously into my train of thought, I dictated letters to two other persons at the same time. I did not keep it up long, but the fault was in the inattention of the person to whom I was dictating. I could not have done this ten years ago. I have schooled myself to it. Self-control means much to you. Indeed, I will go one step further and say it is everything to you, if you wish to excel. I call your attention to an important truth here:

*There is, there can be no such thing as general attention.*

When you looked out the door on the familiar scene, you simply swept your vision around and saw everything — and nothing! When you gazed out the car window you simply got a glimpse of the country through which you passed. When you run through a chapter or book of the Bible at that rate of speed, you *seem* to see everything, but really you see nothing and *remember* nothing. You must learn to set your mind on one thing at a time, not two things, not three things, but one thing. You cannot take in a complex impression at one effort. You can put yourself to the test: I hold up my hand before you, and in it are seven plums. Can you take in seven plums? No, you separate them into four and three,

or three and three and one. The mind naturally deals with units — that is, one thing at a time. All our memory troubles begin in simple violations of this most natural law. At first the infractions of the law are not frequent, but after a time it becomes habitual, and grown up people have but few distinct impressions of the familiar scenes in the midst of which they live. If you doubt it test the first man you meet. Question him about the pictures that hang in his own parlor, and you will be surprised to find how little he really knows about his own surroundings. Is it really any wonder that a man of this character complains of his bad memory for Bible truths? The fact is he does not know whether he can remember anything or not — he has not yet learned anything!

*We must come back to nature's way and learn one thing at a time.*

Suppose I write here a list of twenty-five or fifty simple words and ask you to read them over slowly, one at a time, and then recite them backwards or forwards, could you do it? I will try you. Here is the list: Tank, hall, pond, duck, shop, plow, cattle, barn, wagon, horses, boy, dwelling, smoke, fields, road, buggy, school-house, dwelling, barn, mountain, clouds, farm-house, barn, farm-house, river, island, fields, farm-house, steamer, farm-house, yawl, man, boy, crow. These words mean nothing to you particularly, but I will read them over slowly and then test your powers of attention and memory.

There! how many do you remember?

“Only the first three or four.”

Why is this? I answer for you. The words had no object behind them to your mind, and in consequence, after the first three or four, all was confusion to your mind. I can show you a better way, and in a very few moments you can repeat the whole list. To me each word has an object behind it. Now if I can make you see these objects, *one at a time clearly*, I will have convinced you that you have a surprisingly good memory, and that you are capable of giving prolonged attention to any object or subject you choose. All these words have objects behind them. I will show them to you. Set your mind on each one and endeavor to “see it.” These objects can be seen from the School of the Evangelists, looking east. We will take our position in front of the main building :

*Tank* — it is just to the right of us, on a frame thirty feet high; it holds about eight thousand gallons. Look at it as if it were the only object in the world.

*Hall* — it is our new Hall for the young preachers; it is located beyond the tank, and is painted white.

*Pond* — it is down at the foot of the hill at the right of the path; it contains about one acre and a half.

*Duck* — see, swimming the pond.

*Shop* — at the left of the path near the pond.

*Plow* — it lies on the ground in front of the shop.

*Cattle* — standing in the pond at the right of the shop, drinking.

*Barn* — just beyond the shop.

*Wagon* — standing near the barn.

*Horses* — hitched to the wagon.

*Boy* — sitting in the wagon holding the horses.

*Dwelling* — look at it just beyond the barn.

*Smoke* — curling upward from the chimneys of the house.

*Road* — to our right, back of the farm.

*Buggy* — going up the road.

*School-house* — look in the direction the buggy is going and a little to the right.

*Dwelling* — the home of my parents; it is located some distance to the left of the school-house. See it?

*Barn* — a few hundred yards this side of the house.

*Mountain* — lying east of us, seemingly bounding the world.

*Clouds* — banked up above the mountain.

*Farm-house* — old-fashioned house a few hundred yards east of father's.

*Barn* — near old-fashioned house. See it?

*Farm-house* — about two miles east; look closer, it is almost hidden among the trees.

*River* — see it! It seems to run out of the hills and mountains away to the east of the farm-house and down through the fertile bottoms until it sweeps gently by where we are standing.

*Island* — a short distance east of us; see! it is shaped like the new moon.

*Fields* — beyond the river.

*Farm-house* — almost hidden by trees, across the river from the upper end of the Island.

*Steamer* — going up the river to the right of the Island.

*Farm-house* — across the river, a little east of us.

*Yawl* — crossing the river below point of the island.

*Man* — at the landing across the river.

*Boy* — rowing the boat across the river.

*Crow* — flying across the river over the head of the boy.

Before you proceed further I want to suggest another important truth :

*Things used together tend to suggest each other.*

Thus Moses suggests Aaron, or Aaron suggests Moses. Washington suggests the Revolution and the Revolution suggests Washington. In endeavoring to call to mind this long list of things you naturally pass from one to the other in the order that you see them, but if you thoroughly grasp the objects you can begin at any point and finish the list. Form a list like this for yourself and set your mind on one object at a time, and for sufficient time to get a distinct impression, and then pass on. If you will test yourself by practice you will be delighted to find that you have a good memory, and will agree with Cicero, who, after long and serious meditation, decided and declared that memory is the strongest proof of the immortality of man.

If you begin with simple exercises you will soon be able to *think objectively* in everything. You cannot hope to find an object behind every word. Often it will be behind the word, sometimes a phrase, sometimes a sentence and sometimes a paragraph.

*Do not try to remember everything.*

Sidney Smith is credited with saying that it was no more necessary for him to remember all the books that he had read in order to become wise, than to *taste* all the dinners that he had eaten in order to become fat! The Bible is a big book; you cannot hope to master it all in one short lifetime. Hasten slowly! Read in order to feed your own soul. You know more than any other human being what you need. Read with care. Select what you need *now*, and when you find a truth that fits into your heart, mind, conscience, life, do not read another line, another word, until by *fixed attention* and *persistent application* you make it a part of yourself. Doing this you will never forget it. I know the temptation to go on, promising to return, is great, but you must exercise the will or your failure is certain. Do not concern yourself about the memory; concern yourself about *attending to the one thing at a time*. The importance of doing this can hardly be exaggerated, and in order to fix it in your memory I will put it in italics:

1. *It tends to produce the habit of attention.*
2. *It is one step toward conquering the natural tendency to haste.*



3. *It places us experimentally in possession of one truth at least.*

4. *It helps the memory, for the retentive faculty like all others delights in exercise.*

5. *It helps the mind in general; nothing in my judgment will so quickly and certainly make a bright mind dull as inattention.*

6. *One truth well learned is, in the battle of life, worth more in dollars, cents and souls than a score of whole truths half known and half remembered.*

Difficulties will confront you, but you can in time overcome them. One real victory over your bad mental habits will influence your whole life. You will find it difficult in some things to think objectively, but attention is the key to understanding. Where the thing is abstract to the mind you will soon be able to associate it with its results, and thus make it objective to your mind. For example: Electricity, steam, magnetism, are difficult to grasp, but electricity propels cars, steam drives engines, magnetism attracts; in this way you can soon make an object of the most elusive and inexplicable forces. You will find things in the Bible with whose character you are unfamiliar, and for this reason you will think it almost impossible to remember them, and it is impossible to remember them readily unless you familiarize yourself with the objects. This you can do, for this is an age of helps to Biblical study. A forcible illustration of this is the use that is made of maps. Why use maps instead of descriptions in the printed page?

*A map brings the country objectively before the eye, and thence the mind.*

To you the Bible deals with strangers whose ideas, tastes, manners, hopes and lives were different in many respects from your own. The natural history it presents, incidentally, of course, differs in many respects from what you see around you. It will be well for you to familiarize yourself with these things if they touch you at any vital spot, but do not simply *see* them on the printed page, endeavor to *see* things in real life.

Have you ever studied geography? Certainly. Then you have observed that it is the easiest thing to *learn* and *forget* in the world! Why is this so? Because the average teacher and the average pupil *see* only the printed page and the map, while these things are intended to bring the country with its natural features, rivers, lakes, seas, mountains, valleys, and its artificial features, cities, towns, railroads and canals, *objectively before the mind*. The pupil, through the map, should have his vision broadened into seeing the world, and when *you* read the Bible *you* must, through the printed page, *see* the real things of history behind the pages.

*If you can master these things, and you can by attention, you will be surprised to find yourself in what, to you, will be a new world.*

You have often complained that you cannot remember the hard names in the Bible. I used to find it so, but I do not find it hard now, for I can set and hold my

attention on whatever I choose and hold it there, and you can do the same if you make up your mind to do it. I submit two diagrams that may prove helpful. If you could know the men personally you could remember their names much easier, but as the name would represent to your mind only shadows of what was once real, you can only hope to learn by the force of will and attention. If you can associate the name — man — with an event in his life it will help you. If I give you one name only you can hold it, hence you must take them one at a time and remember the relation one stands to the other. I want you, for example, to give me the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve apostles, and you find it hard to do. Now let us diagram them and then you may try again:

TWELVE SONS OF JACOB.

REUBEN.	SIMEON.	LEVI.
JUDAH.	DAN.	NAPHTALI.
GAD.	ASHER.	ISSACHAR.
ZEBULON.	BENJAMIN.	JOSEPH.

In the first square at the top I place the name of Jacob's first-born son, Reuben. I will suppose that you

never heard of Jacob's twelve sons before, and that you are very anxious to learn their names. Look at the diagram. Look away, and then tell me what you saw. You must confess that you have only the most confused idea of what was before you. You have made the most common blunder by supposing that you have twelve names to learn and remember, and you tried to take them all in at one effort and thus got nothing! The fact is you have only one name to learn at a time. Concentrate your attention on the name in the first square and hold it intently for a few moments. Now shut your eyes and tell me what you see. Just what you did when your eye was upon it. The first act I call attention; the second act I call memory. After the attention is once fixed, memory is easy. Take the next name, exert your will, fix your eye, focalize your attention. Now close your eyes and tell me what you see. Simeon, most distinctly. The mind deals with units; images may be complex at last, but the mind takes but one thing at a time. Here is another important fact: your mind now has two *distinct* records, Reuben and Simeon. It has also a complex record, for from this time forward the mention of Reuben will remind you of Simeon. You can finish the lesson without further aid. The following diagram must be treated in the same way:

## THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

SIMON PETER.	ANDREW.	JAMES.
JOHN.	PHILIP.	BARTHOLOMEW.
THOMAS.	MATTHEW.	JAMES.
LEBBÆUS.	SIMON.	JUDAS.

Many people find it most difficult to remember "book, chapter and verse," and thus find it most difficult to find passages or recall their place. This is not difficult if you go at it in the right manner. Indeed, it is easy to remember them after they are once *fixed* in the mind. Suppose, for example, that the preacher used as a text John, 5th chapter and 10th verse, and you want to fix it in your mind so you can recall it readily at any time, you must fix your attention on "John," then "5th chapter," then "10th verse," thus:

JOHN,	5TH CHAPTER	10TH VERSE.
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*Let your motto be: One thing, one impression at a time.*

Memory deals only with personal impressions, but it

is of the utmost importance to have the memory call up the right thing at the right time, and in the right manner. I shall attempt to tell you briefly how I do this, and, for the sake of emphasis, I ask you to indulge me if I, by way of emphasis, repeat in substance what I have said in other forms elsewhere.

### 1. Clear Impressions.

I think you can grasp the significance of this now, for I think you are convinced that memory deals with impressions, only the memory is like the photographer's sensitive plate. If he gets a first-class impression he can make copies of it indefinitely, and every copy will be exactly like the first and like the original. If you get a distinct impression on the memory through either one of the five senses you can make as many copies as you please, and make them whenever you please. The photographer requires you to sit absolutely still until he gets the impression, and you must fix your attention intensely if you wish to reproduce by memory what you see. "Impression governs expression." How exceedingly important, therefore, is it that you exercise care and get a clear impression. In private life and in public life you cannot make a greater impression on others than the truth makes on you.

*In order to remember you must first know; in order to know you must give attention; in order to give attention you must exercise your will.*

I give it as my deliberate opinion that the man who

sees things when he reads, or talks, or preaches can make other people see them too. The reason people fall asleep under preaching is they see only what the preacher sees, and he sees nothing!

## **2. Grouping Things that are Alike.**

I arrange my knowledge in the most orderly manner possible. I endeavor to so group facts that are related, or that belong to the same family, in such a way that the suggestion of one will cause the whole family to instantly spring into life. For example, and while I am deeply conscious that it is true, it is hard to make it clear to you:

*I begin with familiar topics like faith, or repentance, or godliness, and group the thoughts in my mind so that at the mention of one I am enabled to recall in a moment all I know on the subject, and this grouping of things that are alike extends to every variety of Scriptural knowledge. When I, in my reading, come across a passage that strikes me as new, and this is often the case, I instantly know where to find its kinsmen in the realm of revelation. In this way I make the Bible a self-interpreting book.*

## **3. Depend on Your Memory Always.**

Many Bible readers and teachers, while they claim to have good memories, show by their acts that they are afraid to depend upon them. I give you this bit of advice: Never, under any circumstances, hamper yourself with notes or artificial helps of any kind. If your mind is properly imbued with the truth you cannot fail. Memory is like muscle. You can carry a well, strong arm in

a sling until it will be useless, and if you commit to paper what God intends you to let Him write upon your memory you can never hope to accomplish much.

Keep your living mind in contact with the living truth on the one side, and in contact with living man on the other side, and then discard all artificial helps and speak out of a heart on fire with the truth. This advice applies as much to the Christian working for the Maker as he toils for his daily bread as it does to the preacher in the pulpit.

#### **4. Strict and Constant Obedience to the Will of God.**

This may startle you somewhat, but I believe that on reflection you will feel and admit its truth. The natural tendency of the human mind is to forget or put away an unpleasant truth, and all truth which condemns us is unpleasant.

*Strive to so live that every remembrance of Bible truth will give you pleasure. In this way only can you hope to reach the limit of your possibilities.*

Take the Bible up as you would any book. Read it as God's message to man. Get hold of the truth, thought or object, and hold on to it.

*How? See next Lesson.*



## LESSON IX.

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### **Old Testament Illustrations.**

There is an abundance of proof in the Old Testament that God, Himself, uses, and thus endorses, the objective method of teaching men. The manifestations of God were generally associated with something that appealed to the senses, so that the appearance of the object would suggest the deeper meaning of that with which it was associated. I mention :

1. God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex., 3: 1-6).
2. The miracles in Egypt appeal to the senses (Ex., 8: 5-7; 12: 1-32).
3. The descent of the Lord upon the mount was visible (Ex., 19: 1-23).
4. The tables of stone appealed to the eye, and hence to the mind (Ex., 32: 15, 16).
5. The words "Holiness unto the Lord," were placed upon the priest's cap, so that the one suggested the other (Ex., 39: 30).
6. The people were commanded to write the words of the law upon their door posts and gate posts, in order

to be constantly reminded of the will of God (Deut., 6: 6-9).

7. They were commanded to put fringes and ribbons on the borders of their garments, to remind them of the words of God (Num., 15: 38, 39).

8. Aaron's rod that budded, was forever associated in the minds of the people with Korah's awful end, and the final recognition of Aaron as priest (Num., 16: 1-50; 17: 1-13).

9. They were commanded to erect pillars, plaster them, and write upon them the words of God, and thus the sight of the pillars reminded them of the words of God (Deut., 27: 1-8).

10. The tabernacle itself was designed to *objectively* emphasize the presence of God among His people (Ex., 25: 8).

With these suggestions let us endeavor to apply what we have learned by *reading* and seeing.

### 1. The Offering of Isaac.

This bit of history is both striking and picturesque. I will read slowly, but before we begin I call your attention to the fact that Abraham was living at Beer-sheba (Gen., 22: 19). Isaac is supposed to have been at least twenty-five years old. I do not want you to think I am reading, but to endeavor to bring the scene back to life again. Shut out the world, fix your attention — be careful or you will wander. Use your will. Bear in mind that you are to do your best to see mentally what you

could have seen with your eyes if you had been there and looked upon the whole transaction :

“And it came after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am; and he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you: and Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son, and he said, Beheld the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of: and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham

stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba (Gen., 22: 3-19.)”

Do you grasp the *objects*? Look closer: from the standpoint of *learning* I designate them *sense-objects*, because they appeal to the physical senses, and from the standpoint of memory I call them *thought-objects*. If the

objects are thoroughly impressed as you read or study, it will be easy to revive the images in their order. I suggest that you make yourself master of this narrative according to the new method. The time you devote to it will be well spent, for you will discover two important truths in the doing of it:

1. *That you can give good attention.*
2. *That you have a good memory when you use it well.*

I leave you with your lesson for a time. Be scrupulously careful to follow instructions: take one object at a time, and, for the present, dismiss all thought of retaining the words. This will come later. Have you mastered your lesson? If so, I am ready to hear you recite it. Close your book.

Close your eyes and exert your will. What do you see?

1. I see a grove and a well, near it the herds of the patriarch, and in the grove the tent in which he lives.

2. I see the sun go down and the darkness creep over hill and valley.

3. About midnight I hear a voice and see the patriarch awake, and hear him promptly answer: "Behold, here I am."

4. Then I hear the command that almost broke Abraham's heart, and see him toss on his bed, watching for the day.

5. I see him, on the very first sign of approaching

dawn, arise and saddle his ass, and call two young men and Isaac, cleave the wood for the offering, and start.

6. I journey with them to the third day, and I lift up my eyes and see Moriah in the distance.

7. I hear him command the young men to tarry while he and the lad shall go to the mountain and worship, promising to come again.

8. I see him lay the wood upon the shoulders of the young man, and with fire and knife start on the sad journey.

9. I listen to their conversation by the way as the son makes inquiries about the offering, and the father, with sublime faith, answers him that God will provide.

10. I see them arrive at their destination, and the father hastily gathers a few stones, erects an altar, lays the wood in order, and binds his son and lays him upon the wood.

11. Then I see the patriarch standing by with blanched face and uplifted knife.

12. Listen! What voice is that? It is the voice of the angel of God commanding him to stay his hand.

13. I look again, and a short distance from the altar I see a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. I see the son unbound, and as the ram is placed upon the altar and the fire kindled, I hear him say to his son, who is standing by: "The Lord will provide."

14. Listen! I hear the voice of the angel again. What is he saying? Attention! He assures Abraham

that as he had not withheld his only son, God would multiply him exceedingly, and bless the world through him.

15. I return with Abraham in triumph to Beer-sheba with his son and dwell there.

## 2. The Apostasy of Israel.

I will read :

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him. Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they

have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation, and Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people; remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever, and the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. And Moses turned and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.



And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. And when Moses saw that the people were naked: (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies): then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, put every

man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Ex., 32: 1-28)."

Keep before your mind the great encampment at Sinai and the fact that Moses was absent in the Mount, as you study your lesson. Now close your book and your eyes, and tell me what you see and hear:

1. I see the people gather around Aaron and hear them ask him to make them a god to go before them.

2. I see them come to him again with an offering of material with which to make an idol.

3. I watch Aaron as he proceeds with his sinful task, and see the calf set up and given credit for their deliverance.

4. I see them on the next day as they crowd around the idol with their offerings, and witness their insolent revelings.

5. I listen and I hear the voice of Jehovah informing Moses of what the people had been guilty.

6. I see Moses fall down before the Lord and hear him plead most earnestly and eloquently in their behalf.

7. I see Moses turn and come down from the mountain, having the tables of stone in his hands.

8. I see Joshua approach Moses and suggest that there is war in the camp, to which Moses replies that it is not war but reveling.

9. I see Moses approach the camp, and, boiling with indignation, throw the tables of stone down and break them to fragments on the rock.

10. I see him as he courageously faces that mighty mob and reduces their gold to dust.

11. I hear him reproach Aaron for his perfidity, and I hear Aaron's flimsy excuse.

12. I see Moses as he stands in the gate of the city and calls for volunteers, and I see the sons of Levi bravely take their stand with him.

13. I see them invade the encampment and slay men until the dead are seen on every side.

*I have given you only the barest outline; you can, without difficulty, enlarge it if you choose.*

*How? See next Lesson.*

## LESSON X.

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### **New Testament Illustrations.**

The New Testament also furnishes proof that the objective method of study is nature's own method. The deep suggestiveness, the perpetual sweetness and the surprising newness to those who read it most, are in the objects that lie behind the printed page. So striking and picturesque are these objects that the reverent reader does not seem to read at all. It seems rather to him that Jesus and the apostles are yet alive on earth, and that they are personally talking to him.

*Thought lives because the objects behind it once throbbed and overflowed with life. This is pre-eminently true of the Bible, especially when we reflect that its real Author is still alive.*

The truth of what I have been arguing in these lessons will be apparent to you as you advance:

1. Jesus Christ Himself is proof that my conclusions are based on both nature and revelation. God is all-powerful; He knows all things; He is everywhere present at all times. The untutored mind of man cannot encompass Him. In Jesus Christ, God the Creator and Pro-

vider, becomes objective in a body like unto our own. I can set my mind on Him — all beyond Him is too great for me! As further proof of this I have only to refer you to the fact that all idols are but the feeble efforts of lost man to make God *objective to the senses of the body and thence to the faculties of the mind*. Some heathen when upbraided on account of idolatry admit that their idols are not God, but assert that they “help them think of God.”

*In my judgment it is impossible for man to abandon idolatry permanently without the knowledge of Jesus the Christ. We must have an object on which to fix our minds and God Himself cannot be objective to the human mind. Herein is the proof of the Sonship of Jesus: He meets the exact and universally recognized need of the whole race as an object of faith and worship.*

2. The methods of Jesus were objective in their character. He did not deal in abstractions. His acts of mercy and the lessons He endeavored to teach were all associated with familiar objects, so that those who witnessed them with mortal eyes, and those who witness them with the eyes of their understanding, can easily remember them because of the objects with which they are associated. The Kingdom which He came to set up had never before existed, hence it was not objective to the mind of man. Some endeavored to make it so, and fell into the error of supposing that His Kingdom was to be literally the resuscitation and re-establishment of the

kingdom of David. It is easy to see that he had a difficult task. But the *real* Kingdom of God was *like* many *real* objects about them. Hence he began to tell them what the Kingdom of God was *like* and thus gradually brought it *objectively* before them. If He had not used the most familiar objects, His hearers would have been mystified rather than enlightened. He used objects with the nature of which they were on terms of perfect familiarity. Suppose He had said that the Kingdom of Heaven was like an electric battery, a steam engine, or a submarine telegraphic cable — they could not have understood Him, for these things did not exist and were not therefore objective in His day. But there were mustard seed, fishers' nets, sowers of seed, vines, shepherds, fig-trees and leaven everywhere. When He said that His Kingdom was like a mustard seed they at once saw it spring up from a small seed to a great plant. When He said that the Kingdom of Heaven was like the fishers' net, every fisherman was able to take it in. When He said that the Kingdom of Heaven was like unto a sower who went forth to sow, every farmer comprehended Him. When He compared Himself to a vine, every man who cultivated grapes was taught an important lesson. When He compared Himself to a shepherd, every keeper of sheep knew something of His true character. When He used the fig-tree as an illustration, every person acquainted with its growth and fruit was instructed. When He declared that the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, every woman who cooked knew what He meant.

*The great difficulty with men in our day is that the things of the Bible, by force of habit, do not seem real. The objective method of study will bring revelation back into the realm of personal experience.*

3. The cross of Christ makes His death for our sins objective to our senses and faculties. If the gospel had simply declared that He died for us, without telling us how He died, it would be next to impossible for us to bring ourselves to the point of vividly perceiving, and of unreservedly accepting His sacrifice. The cross was once a symbol of infamy, but He has made it a synonym of glory, salvation and world-wide conquest.

*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal., 6: 14)."*

I now submit a few illustrations in order to more fully emphasize the practical nature of my method. I say "my method," but in reality it is as much your method as it is mine. You have never *learned* much by any other method. Departing from nature's own method you have concluded, and perhaps consoled yourself with the thought that God never intended you to learn and remember. A more radical and dangerous error does not exist. He intended you to learn and remember His will, and you will be held accountable if you fail.

### **1. God's Care for His Children.**

I will read:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,

where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall



we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek): for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Matt., 6: 19-34).”

This is a rather difficult lesson. Indeed, I have chosen it on that account. Read it carefully and repeatedly. Fix one thing on your mind at a time. Avoid confusion. Take your time. Life is before you. If you can master this lesson and make it a part of yourself, mentally and spiritually, you will do well.

Now close your book and your eyes, and tell me what you see, in the order suggested by the lesson.

1. I see a man who gives his heart, his mind, his soul, his life, for wealth, and in his old age, while he sleeps, moths devour and thieves break through and steal.

2. I see another man; he gives his life to the service of man, thus serving God, and in doing this lays up infinite and eternal riches in the Bank of Heaven.

3. I see an enlightened man, who sees God and goodness in everything, and another man who is unenlightened, and he sees nothing but evil.

4. I see a man trying to serve two masters.

5. I see a man endeavoring to serve God and Mammon at the same time.

6. I see Jesus, and hear His solemn command not to plan for the gratification of the flesh.

7. I look around me, and in every direction I see the fowls of the air, happy and healthy, fed upon God's bounty.

8. I look again, and I see the lilies of the field lifting their white bosoms to the sunlight of heaven.

9. I see Solomon in all his glory.

10. It is morning. I see the green fields stretching away in every direction. It is evening, and the fields are brown and bare!

11. I look up to God and realize that if He can feed the birds, and make the lilies grow, and clothe the fields, that He can care for me.

12. I listen and hear a voice. I look and see Jesus. He assures me, and I believe Him, that if I shall concern myself about the welfare and extension of His Kingdom, He will add, without any trouble on my part, all I need, and that relying on His loving care and unchanging faithfulness, I need not be troubled or anxious about what shall be to-morrow.

Do not leave this lesson until you fix it objectively in your mind. I am endeavoring to correct your bad mental habits. If you have the determination to stick to this lesson until you learn it and make it your own, you can then advance with a firm confidence in your ability to master everything. Further, if you will take this lesson to heart it will free you from many unnecessary cares.

and help you to get your mind in better condition to study. I offer you this lesson as a sure remedy for *over-anxiety about temporal things, and as a sure cure also for a poor memory.*

You need only to take it once, but it must be combined with hearty submission and calm, deliberate, and determined attention.

## **2. The Transfiguration of Jesus.**

Fix your mind on it as I read; not the words, but the objects back of them:

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment as white as the light; and, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him: then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of

man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matt., 17: 1-13).”

Read in connection Mark, 9: 1-13, and Luke, 9: 28-37. This is a night scene. Study it slowly. Fix your attention on each object as the words suggest them. Do not run the objects together. Do not try to grasp the whole at one effort; no human mind is capable of doing this. Do not hurry through and then endeavor to call up an assorted lot of confused images or impressions. Take one thing at a time and fix it in your mind, then shut your eyes and endeavor to recall it. If you are not satisfied, open your book and try again. Do not let your mind wander. Exert your will. Concentrate! Focalize! Fix! Hold! I can make the scene so real that it almost seems like a personal experience, and when I endeavor to recall it I am living it over again, and it is vivid to me in an important sense like it was to the eye-witnesses. Seeing Jesus transfigured it is easy to see Him in His present glory, for Peter, James and John had a fore-taste of what He is now.

Are you ready? Close your book and your eyes.

Shut out the world. Fix your attention. Now tell me what you see?

1. I see Jesus start with Peter, James and John into a high mountain.

2. I see them arrive at the top of the mountain and kneel in prayer.

3. As He prays I see a wondrous change come over Him; His raiment becomes as white as snow and His countenance shines against the darkness of the night like the new-born sun.

4. I see Peter, James and John, as if the scene was too much for them, fall prostrate on the ground.

5. I see Moses, whose feet had never touched the promised land before, and Elijah, who generations before in a chariot of fire ascended to God, come and stand by Him and converse with Him.

6. I see Peter, with James and John, arouse themselves from their slumber and propose to erect three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

7. While Peter is speaking I see a bright cloud overshadow them and hear a voice ring out the wondrous words: *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."*

8. I see the apostles in fear prostrate themselves upon the earth.

9. I see Moses and Elijah as they depart beyond the bright clouds into the night.

10. I see Jesus go and arouse Peter, James and

John, and as they arise the scene changes back to the earth-life.

11. I go with them down the mountain and converse with Jesus about His coming death and resurrection.

I think you are now capable of launching out for yourself: But I want to warn you most solemnly against inattention, and your old habit of hastening over what you read without grasping it. A little learning is not a dangerous thing. One thing well learned, is the thing to be sought after. The third and fourth illustrations I desire you to treat exactly as we treated the other. Read slowly, and carefully, *studiously!* and then close your book, take a pencil and write down, in order, your impressions. Keep up the exercise until you are master of yourself and your lesson.

**3. Jesus at Jacob's Well (Jno. 4:1-42.)**

**4. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts, 9:1-22.)**

Let this thought cheer you through all your efforts: What I mark out for you to do has been done by others. I have done it, I do it, and:

“WHAT MAN HAS DONE, MAN CAN DO.”

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THE AUTHOR.