

Can you have it both ways? A spirit directed organization that receives theocratic guidance and direction that does not rely on human wisdom, yet makes hundreds of corrections in their teachings and rules because their leaders are imperfect fleshly men that need to be corrected? Eve was deceived the same way—she had believed the truth of God's Word alone until she left the “anointed one” give her a false understanding of it.

Nothing that Jehovah told His prophets, apostles or spirit-led leaders ever had to be corrected even though these men were not perfect because Jehovah's Word is perfect even though it came through imperfect men.

Is it rebellion to make people accountable for their claims of divine leadership that is supposed to be like the apostles? Didn't the Lord say that if the blind be followers of the blind that they both would fall in the ditch?

***** w73 7/1 pp. 401-402 Praise Jehovah with His People *****

WHY APPRECIATE GOD'S ORGANIZATION

³ For one thing, Jesus' anointed followers, who are part of Jehovah's earthly organization, are “ambassadors substituting for Christ.” Their companions with earthly hopes also serve the interests of the Kingdom. (2 Cor. 5:20) Mind you, they are not ambassadors and envoys of a mere human government and of sinful rulers. They represent Jehovah, his exalted spirit king Jesus Christ and the mighty kingdom of God. What an inestimable privilege! Of course, to serve and praise the Universal Sovereign, one must associate with the organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

⁴ Consider, too, the fact that Jehovah's organization alone, in all the earth, is directed by God's holy spirit or active force. (Zech. 4:6) Only this organization functions for Jehovah's purpose and to his praise. To it alone God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is not a sealed book. Many persons of the world are very intelligent, capable of understanding complex matters. They can read the Holy Scriptures, but they cannot understand their deep meaning. Yet God's people can comprehend such spiritual things. Why? Not because of special intelligence on their part, but as the apostle Paul declared: “For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. 2:10) Jesus Christ praised his heavenly Father for ‘hiding such things from the wise and intellectual ones but revealing them to babes.’ (Matt. 11:25) How very much true Christians appreciate associating with the only organization on earth that understands the “deep things of God”!

⁵ Direction by God's spirit enables Jehovah's servants to have divine light in a world of spiritual darkness. (2 Cor. 4:4) For instance, long ago they understood that 1914 C.E. would mark the end of the Gentile Times or “appointed times of the nations,” during which the Gentile nations were allowed uninterrupted rulership of the earth. (Luke 21:24) This 2,520-year period began with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians in the late seventh century B.C.E. For example, Zion's Watch Tower of March 1880 had declared: “The Times of the Gentiles’ extend to 1914, and the heavenly kingdom will not have full sway till then.” Only God by his holy spirit could have revealed this to those early Bible students so far in advance.

You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth

Chapter 23

God's Visible Organization

THEOCRATIC DIRECTION TODAY

¹³ God's visible organization today also receives theocratic guidance and direction. At the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, there is a governing body of older Christian men from various parts of the earth who give the needed oversight to the worldwide activities of God's people. This governing body is made up of members of “the faithful and discreet slave.” It serves as a spokesman for that faithful “slave.”

¹⁴ The men of that governing body, like the apostles and older men in Jerusalem, have many years of experience in God's service. But they do not rely on human wisdom in making decisions. No, being governed theocratically, they follow the example of the early governing body in Jerusalem, whose decisions were based on God's Word and were made under the direction of holy spirit.—Acts

***** w81 8/15 pp. 25-30 Serving Jehovah “Shoulder to Shoulder” *****

Serving Jehovah “Shoulder to Shoulder”

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

¹³ In serving Jehovah “shoulder to shoulder,” we need, as Zephaniah so often emphasizes, to cultivate the quality of meekness. When we make mistakes, as all imperfect humans do, let us be ready to acknowledge them, even as the “faithful and discreet slave,” made up of imperfect fleshly men, has had to make corrections...

time, in the ending of this age, that we are favored with such a clear unfolding of spiritual things. It is also our thought that present blessings of a temporal kind, such as the electric light, are due for similar reasons. We believe that any other explanation would confer too great honor upon the individual connected with the production. The very ablest minds in the world have examined these subjects, but now, by God's grace, we have come to the place where the veil is taken away and where we can see the real meaning of God's Word—not merely one person can see it, but hundreds, thousands, see it.

We think that we get the right conception to thus view it rather than to think that we had some great power which enabled us to put together a great system of theology, more wonderful than all other systems of theology put together—a thousand times more wonderful. Therefore, the simplest way to explain the matter is to acknowledge that the Lord's due time has come and that he has guided to the right understanding.

If, then, the Lord has provided us with something in our day that other days than those of the Apostles knew nothing about, no matter how good nor how wise they were—for us to ignore the line of teaching which has been thus developed would be, in our judgment, to ignore the Lord's providences. It is for each one to think for himself, however, and to guide his conduct in every way accordingly.

If the six volumes of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* are practically the Bible topically arranged, with *Bible proof-texts* given, we might not improperly name the volumes—the Bible in an arranged form. That is to say, they are not merely comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself, since there is no desire to build any doctrine or thought on any individual preference or on any individual wisdom, but to present the entire matter on the lines of the Word of God. We therefore think it safe to follow this kind of reading, this kind of instruction, this kind of Bible study.

Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* with their references, and had not read page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.

Our thought, therefore, is that these *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* are a great assistance, a very valuable help, in the understanding of God's Word. If these books are to be of any value to us it must be because we see in them loyalty to the Word of God, and as far as our judgment goes, see them to be in full harmony with the Word and not antagonistic to it. Therefore, in reading them the first time, and perhaps the second time, and before we would accept anything as being our own personal faith and conviction, we should say, "I will not take it because these studies say so; I wish to see what the Bible says." And so we would study the Scriptures in the light of these *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*; we would prove every point, or disprove it, as the case might be. We would be satisfied with nothing less than a thorough investigation of the Bible from this standpoint.

If, after doing that, we should find the books to be in accord with the Bible, then we would think we were logical in saying, "I will not need to go through that process now every time that I read the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, for I have looked up those texts of Scripture and know certainly that the New Testament proves all those points." If, at the same time, in any future reading, we should come to a place where something did not seem clear to us and we thought of some Scripture which seemed not as harmonious with it as we had previously thought, we would think it our duty to refer at once to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are the standard, and in that reference to the Scripture it would be with a view to discerning whether or not we had been mistaken in our previous examinations.

"THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF GOD"

We would conclude, practically, that we could not understand anything about the Bible except as it was revealed. We would, therefore, not waste a great deal of time doing what we know some people do, reading chapter after chapter, to no profit. We would not think of doing it. We would not think we were studying the Scriptures at all. We would think we were following the course that had been anything but profitable to ourselves and many others in the past—merely reading over the Scriptures. We would say that the same Heavenly

Father who had guided us to this truth, to this understanding of the Scriptures as his children, if he had some further information for us he would bring it to our attention in some manner; and therefore we would not see the necessity of reading the New Testament every day or every year; we would not consider that necessary. We would consider that the Scripture which says, "They shall be all taught of God," would imply that in his own appointed way God would bring to our attention whatever feature of divine truth would be "meat in due season for the household of faith."

Further, we would say that now, having satisfied ourselves respecting what the Divine Plan is, we would understand that we had reached the place that the Apostle speaks of as being a qualified ambassador of God, a qualified minister of the New Covenant, and that, as a servant or minister of the New Covenant, we now had a responsibility in making known these things that we had learned; that we were not put here primarily to read the Bible, but primarily to serve the Lord and his Truth. It was quite proper, however, that before we came to a knowledge of the Truth, and when we were in measurable discontent of mind as to what was the Truth, that we should refrain from telling anybody else.

We remember very well in our own personal experience that after we had tried some street preaching, etc., we came to the conclusion that there was something wrong; that we did not understand what we were trying to tell to others; that we did not understand with sufficient clearness to properly present it and make sure that we were representing the Lord and his message aright, and we said to ourselves, "I will stop any endeavor to teach others until I know what I believe."

We think that should be the attitude of every one of us. Why should we attempt to preach or teach anything that we do not understand? So, after God favors us in this time with an understanding of Present Truth, he has given us a knowledge of more truth than we could have gained in a thousand years if we had read and studied unaided; and now we can attempt to present it to others. Why has he given us a knowledge of this Truth? He wishes us to be "thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work." Therefore, we should study that we may be able to speak the word of the Lord freely and know that we are not misrepresenting the divine purpose and plan and character; and we ought therefore to give the more earnest heed to the opportunities for service and consider that the information which has been given us has been given for the very purpose that we may impart it to others—to those brethren and sisters of the Lord's family, some of whom are in Babylon yet, honest at heart, perhaps, and very desirous of knowing the truth, though perhaps very much blinded as we once were.

"SCRIPTURE STUDIES" NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE BIBLE

This is not, therefore, putting the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* as a substitute for the Bible, because so far as substituting for the Bible, the *STUDIES*, on the contrary, continually refer to the Bible; and if one has any doubt as to a reference or if one's recollection should lapse in any degree, one should refresh his memory, and, in fact, should see that his every thought is in harmony with the Bible—not merely in accord with the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, but in accord with the Bible.

We might remark that quite a number of the friends in the Truth are making it a rule to read twelve pages of the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* a day, and that we do not know one who has been following this course and making use of the various means of grace the Lord has provided (Dawn and testimony meetings and Sunday meetings and Pilgrim meetings and the Berean lessons, Manna text, etc.), who has gone out of the truth. We know a great many who, on the contrary, have been of the opinion that they knew these things long ago, while in fact they do not know half of what they did know—they have forgotten more than half of what they read and they are those who are now stumbling—going into outer darkness.

We are not wishing in this to say anything against one's poring over chapters that he does not understand and others do not understand, hoping that he might light on some truth. We have no objection to this. He has a perfect right to do so if he wishes. He has a right to spend weeks and years in this way if he chooses, but the chances even then are that when he does light on something he will have it all wrong.

Furthermore, we would suggest that merely reading twelve pages of the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* would not be studying in the proper sense of the word—neither studying the Bible nor studying the *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*. A proper study would be to think of the meaning of every word and every sentence. The thought is, it is not to see how much one can read, but to make sure that one goes no further than he comprehends or understands, whether that means one page or twenty pages. We should not