

W315-UNITY_OF_THE_WORD.mp3

[00:00:02] Now, up to now, we have looked at 1 or 2 essential fundamentals. We have spoken about the inspiration of Scripture. We have spoken about the great redemptive work of Christ. We have looked at some of the essential features of the Gospel. We cannot go on unlimitedly like this. This is to help those who are beginners along the road so that they may be able to appreciate the better, the deeper and longer studies which are recorded and are in use. Now, if you are listening to this tape recording and that's all it matters, we shall have failed very simply because they ought to stimulate every one who listens because they ought to say, Oh, I'd like to be able to read the word. I'd like to be able to study the book. I'd like to be. They'd like to be able to search and see. I always remember in my very early days, soon after I was converted, I was drawn very strongly to go to a highly ritualistic mission. And if they'd have converted me there, I should have been a father confessor now walking about with black robes and whatnot. But somebody else suggested that it would be good if I went to a Bible study that was associated with Peek Freans Biscuits People and Huntingdon Stone, who was one of the shareholders, conducted a Bible study for young men. I went to that place. I sat down at that baize covered table.

[00:01:43] I saw a little Hunchback man come out and climb on a stool. He bowed his head and then he looked round and he said, What subject are we having this evening? He didn't tell us what the subject was. He said, What subject shall we have? And then somebody said, Oh, well, if you look in Ezekiel 27, verse 14, you see so and so. And he said, Well, if you look in Hosea, I'm only telling you those names, I don't know what it was. I thought my. Here's a man who knows the book. So the ritualists never got me. But the man who emphasized the Bible did. Well, now that's what I want to be the result of these studies. I want you who are listening to say, I want to go to the book. I want to search and see if these things are so. I want to make them mine. It's one thing to have second hand clothes. It's another thing to have them made to measure. It's one thing to have doled out odds and ends from somebody else's table. It's something to sit down and have food that's been provided for you. So shall we now pay attention to 1 or 2 approaches to the Bible? Of course. This is a big subject itself. All the laws of translation and interpretation, they're not for beginners. But we can pick out 1 or 2 that may be helpful.

[00:03:01] How do we approach this book? Well, I think the approach of heart is very essential. You must come prepared in some measure to consider the meaning of words. You must have some slight acquaintance, at least with grammar. But don't worry over that, because you'll learn as you go along. The very essence of it. But if you come with a wrong spirit, this book is sensitive. It will feel your approach and it will close. And it will not speak to you if you come with a higher critical attitude, instead of coming with an attitude of saying, God has spoken, let me hear what he says. But if you come with that spirit, you want to know what God has said. It will open. And so we read the entrance of thy word giveth light. It giveth understanding to the simple. What are the first thing I would like to do is to read 1 or 2 passages with regard to the way in which this book is to be approached if we're ever going to extract from it teaching. I'm reading now for one Buffalonians chapter one, verse five. For our gospel came not unto you in word only. You see, we're dealing with words. The scriptures are written words, but if they remain only words. We filed our gospel came not argue in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and with much assurance.

[00:04:34] As you know what manner of men we were among you, for your sakes. Said that it was commended to them by the manner of life of the men. Who spoke it. How many times a young believer is tripped up because a person who is supposed to be a teacher instead of living the truth? In some measure causing us stumbling to those who listen. So he goes on in the next verse and ye became followers of us and of the Lord. Isn't that extraordinary? He put himself first. Ye became followers of us and of the Lord. But that's right. You think of what it means to follow the Lord. Oh, how difficult. Can we ever do it? Then they slipped in between you and the great example, the lesser lowly example of Paul and his associates. And if those men who were sinners like ourselves could be so blessed and saved that they could follow the Lord, then so can you. So here's our pattern. He became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. So you see, it was a real thing with them. They didn't really sit down and read a book and chuck the book, and at the end of it, it was something that entered into their lives and it brought a certain amount of pressure upon them, difficulties as well.

[00:05:56] We've already read one Thessalonians chapter two, but for the sake of those who did not read it with us, I'll read verse 13 again. For this cause also. Thank we God without ceasing. Because when you receive the Word of God, which He heard of us, he

received it not as the word of men, but as it is, in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. Well, there you have another statement with regard to the way in which it was received. Now, there's one other passage. There are many of them. You must look them up afterwards. But there's one other which I must turn to. That's the 17th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. 17th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, this is going to speak about Thessalonica. We've just read the Epistle to the Thessalonians, how they received the Word of God. You see, they were commended for it. Now, this says Acts 17, verse 11. There were some people who were even better than those Thessalonians. Well, what were they doing then? Verse 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica. Who were these? Oh, people who lived in a small village called Berea. It's not a very big place even now. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

[00:07:29] You see, these people didn't just swallow what was given to them. They received the Word of God readily. But they went back home and I opened the scriptures again and they searched to see if the teacher was according to truth. And if so, then they believed it. Now, that's the true Berean spirit. And if you've wondered why this mission is called the Berean Forward Movement, and the magazine which we publish is called the Berean Expositor, it's that just that we want you to receive the Word of God readily, but we want you to test and try by that word, everything that you're taught, and by that you'll become strong because you'll not be standing in the faith of others. But you will have searched to see if these things are so. Well, now there are two approaches. And one of them I'm going to cram in the next few minutes. Then after an interval, we shall take the other one for the second 20 minutes of this series, and they go in opposite directions, but they're not contrary. The first principle that I'm going to bring before you on this is based upon the fact that the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is one. And the second principle in the second of these studies will be to emphasize a lot of differences. And those two go together. It's one revelation. And you can compare one part with another right through.

[00:08:59] You see, we've got a concordance which gives you all the words that are found from Genesis to Revelation. But that's assuming that you can compare one part with another. I've never seen a concordance. So that you could take it down and you could read the writings of Alfred the Great and the poet Chaucer and the Times and

look up words and see what they mean. Of course, in the course of those few hundred years, some of the words would not be intelligible at all. I wouldn't have any similar meaning. Yet you got a book here that was written over a period longer than a thousand years in two or at least three different languages. And yet when you compare Genesis with Revelation one whole. Now, the passage which I would like you to notice in this connection, is found in the first Epistle to the Corinthians chapter two, verse 13. First Corinthians chapter two, verse 13. The apostle is very concerned about this wisdom of words. He mentioned it in Thessalonians. This wisdom of words, enticing words of man's wisdom. Verse four. Now he comes and says this. Verse 13, which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teaches. I hope you won't go away and advertise this meeting and say, Oh, the speaker, there is an orator that, Oh, it's marvelous. It isn't praying. It's a hesitating, stumbling speaker who wishes he could say it better.

[00:10:43] We are not trying to impress you with our eloquence. We are asking you to rather look upon us as fingerposts pointing to the Lamb of God. He says No, no. Not the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Now there is a suggestion which the Holy Ghost teaches. Where would you find words which the Holy Ghost teaches? Well, the implication is they are this book. These words have been given by inspiration of God. They are the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. Well, now, if you are going to pick out any one word at any time in your study and you go straight off at a tangent and try to tell everybody what it means, you may make a mistake. The first thing you must do is to discover whether the Holy Ghost has used that word again anywhere else. And in most cases, you will find that the word is used five, six, ten, 20 times or more. Well, then you must patiently collect those passages. You must weigh over their meaning. And you must try to discover a common denominator so that, however different they may sound, they will have something in common. And then you will begin to get the meaning of the Spirit of God. Otherwise, you may be very far astray. How far are we justified in saying that the words which we have in front of us were actually given by the Holy Spirit? Shall we make sure of that for a start? Act 116 And if you find any difficulty in turning to these passages, or rather listen and find them afterwards, then missed something because as we turn to them so rapidly.

[00:12:35] Acts 116. Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David Spake before concerning Judas. Well, that's very explicit, isn't it? The Holy Ghost spoke, but he used the mouth of David, and David spoke about the temptation through which he passed and didn't know he was speaking about a greater temptation that was coming later on in the form of Judas. And then if you go to the other end of the Acts of the Apostles, the last chapter you see Peter is speaking in chapter one and Paul is speaking in chapter 28. Verse 25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed. After that, Paul had spoken one word. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the Prophet unto our Fathers. Oh, there it is. There's two evidences. Peter says it. Paul says it that the Holy Ghost spoke through David or through Isaiah. Well, I'll leave it for you to go on. I don't want to do it all for you. You go on and consider that the Spirit of God is spoken of many times as being the one that actually indicted the words.

[00:13:50] But I'll give you one other reference which is a little bit away from the mere wording, but it comes in line with our study. Hebrews, the ninth chapter, verse 18 to verse eight. In the ninth chapter of Hebrews, the Apostle has been speaking about the tabernacle in the wilderness. You know, with the Showbread and its Lampstand and its ark and its mercy seat. And then he says this in verse eight, The Holy Ghost, this signifying. So you see, it's utterly impossible for us to believe that book to be true and then let somebody tell us that there's no meaning in a tabernacle. It was only a bit of superstitious, superstitious ritual, and we're not perfectly sure whether Moses ever did it or not. I've heard people talk like that, but here it says the Holy Ghost is signifying something. The Tabernacle was a witness. It was a picture of the great work of Christ that was yet to come. So now you see, we've got a few principles to guide us that there is a consistency about this book. That it. Viewers with a variety of subjects. It is Old Testament and new. It is promise and fulfillment. It is law and gospel. It is type and parable and proverb. Oh, what a variety there is in it. And yet it is a consistent whole.

[00:15:18] And then you see if after having become convinced of that, as you go through your studies, you begin to wonder when you come across a certain passage, say, Oh, that seems to be a contradiction. Well, then you should know that is to quicken my interest and make me search a little deeper. If you have been coming to our studies on Thursday evenings, we will be dealing with the nature of being of God. One of the evenings we took the challenge from the Scriptures. No man hath seen God at any

time. And then we could quote a scripture that they saw the God of Israel and the God said He spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. What? That looks like a contradiction, doesn't it? But it only opens a door to a deeper truth if you wait. Because I died. It says the similitude of the Lord behold. And so that lets light in that he saw Christ in the Old Testament, who is the image of the invisible God. But that, of course, is another subject. I just mentioned it that these contradictions are only on the surface because it's dealing with such wonderful subjects. Now, as an illustration of watching for the same words which the Holy Ghost teaches, I'm going to turn to one Corinthians Chapter 13, and that will bring me to the end of my first 20 minutes.

[00:16:46] One Corinthians 13 he is speaking about charity, which of course in the days of the authorized version meant something a little different from charity. Today I was brought up as a child to have a horror of charity, you know, doling out because you happen to be poor and I can't believe that anybody ever said to his intended. I feel very charitable towards you this evening. I dare say the lady had turned round and say, Oh, thank you, do you? This is a word that really comes through from a Latin and we can discard it. It's the actual word for love, just the word used of the love of God. Well, after speaking about love all the way down, he says in verse eight, These words, love never failing. But whether they be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part to be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. What do you say? Why have you brought that into the study? I want you to look again at verse eight and ten and 11. You see the word fail.

[00:18:15] You see the word vanish away. You see the word begun away and you see the words I put away. Well, that makes variety. And it's one of the ideas of a writer that he shouldn't keep on using the same word. It becomes a bit wearisome if you've got one word all the time emphasized all down a page. But on the other hand, supposing the Spirit of God as emphasized a word, and instead of you having that one word, getting into you over and over again like a hammer stroke, you've got it altered four different ways. Will you lose the emphasis, don't you? So should we put it back again? Just one word. The eighth verse. Charity never failing. But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Whether there be knowledge or

failed. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall fail. For when I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, childish things failed. Now that's not good English, is it? So you can understand why the authorized version altered it. But those words are the same in each place. So whether we can stick to one word or not, it doesn't matter as long as we know that, he says, Look, you are magnifying the possession of supernatural gifts.

[00:19:46] You're magnifying the gift of tongues and the fact that you can heal a person of his diseases and all that. But he said, oh, he said something infinitely more wonderful, infinitely more wonderful than that. He said they are merely evidences of the childhood of the church. Whether there be prophecies that the gift of prophecy that's going to fail, that's going to cease, that's going to continue. Whether there be a gift of supernatural knowledge that's going to vanish away, that's going to stop. He says. You see, when I was a child, I used to speak as a child, and they say, That's what you are with all these supernatural gifts, you're only children. But when you become a man, you put away these childish things. So he says, And now we see through a glass darkly. Now, that's not quite the meaning. Now we see by means of a mirror enigmatically, a little bit backwards and a little bit puzzled. But then face to face. Now I know in part. See, he's gone again. Now we know in part. That's all now. But then in that day I shall know, even as I have known. Then back again is and now Abideth Faith, hope, love these three. But the greatest of these is love. Or as it put it, a charity. So let me just sum up before we make a break for a moment.

[00:21:16] You want to discover and compare spiritual things with spiritual, that is to say, the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. Make your doctrine based squarely upon the fact that God has spoken and used that word in that context. Well, that means the unity of the Bible from beginning to end. Otherwise you couldn't compare one thing with another. Now the next study we have will be the opposite direction. We shall be asking you to consider the things that differ. And by the time you put these into operation, the two of them, you've got a safeguard. Because if you're pushed in one direction all the time, you'll be lopsided. If you're pushed in two directions at the same time, you're most likely go straight and you see you get a good many people who've had no father love because of the circumstances of the time he's gone before. They are in breakfast at his home when they've gone to bed. So he's had all mother love, which is immediate.

Looking after you now and no father, no love. That gives you a clout and says, What are you going to be like in 20 years time? And so we get people, teddy boys. And I don't know what rich travelers, but if you get this emphasis upon the things which are one and then the things that differ and between those two, you get a same building up of truth.