

December 31

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all His people. Psalm 116:12-14

THE close of the year is an excellent

time for the making of new resolutions for the year to come. Let us, beloved brethren, make plenty of good resolves respecting what we shall be willing to be, to do, to suffer, in fellowship with our Lord; that we may by His grace make of it the best year thus far of our lives--the year of largest hopes, of largest endeavors, and by the

Lord's grace of largest successes in self-sacrifice, in overcoming the world and its spirit, in vanquishing self and the desires of the flesh, in resisting the adversary, and in glorifying our Lord and blessing His people. Z. '99-286R2551:5

R2551 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

REVIEW OF 1899--DEC. 31

Golden Text.--"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."--Psa. 103:2

The end of one year and the beginning of another is a most favorable occasion for circumspection and retrospection.

We trust that as each reader reviews the year just closing he will be able to repeat our Golden Text appreciatively, --with the spirit and with the understanding also. One of the least expensive offerings we can present to the Lord our God, and yet one which he will appreciate very highly, is thanksgiving--for mercies past and present. The ungrateful are disdained among men, and we may well suppose are far from pleasing in the sight of the Almighty. While every creature throughout the world might find some cause for thankfulness and gratitude and praise, how much more should we who have received so abundantly of the riches of divine grace in the knowledge of his truth--the plan of the ages. We may well apply to ourselves on this occasion the words of our dear Redeemer, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and many righteous persons have desired to see the things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

We said that thanksgivings were cheap offerings; but whoever presents to the Lord real thanksgiving with lips of praise will follow his lip service with something more substantial; and this is intimated in our Golden Text by the words, "O my soul!"--the appeal is not merely to the lips, but to the entire being. And so we find it with ourselves and others today: whoever is truly thankful to the Lord and offers him praise, remembering his benefits, will seek to render

substantial thanks also in deeds that will be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.

While prayers, adorations and praises are the most direct offerings of "incense" to the Lord, nevertheless, he has so arranged matters that we cannot offer these sincerely and acceptably except as we have his spirit: and if we have his spirit, we will at the same time that we offer this incense on the Golden Altar be offering also upon the brazen altar in the "Court" good works--"doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."--Gal. 6:10.

^[1]The close of the year is an excellent time also for the making of new resolutions for the year to come, and on the present occasion there is an added force from the fact that the year before us will be the last one of the century. Let us, beloved brethren, make plenty of good resolves respecting what we shall be willing to be, to do, to suffer, in fellowship with our Lord; that we may by his grace make of it the best year thus far of our lives--the year of largest hopes, of largest endeavors, and by the Lord's grace of largest successes in self-sacrifice, in overcoming the world and its spirit, in vanquishing self and the desires of the flesh, in resisting the Adversary, and in glorifying our Lord and blessing his people.

^[1] Dec. 31 Manna, Psa. 116:12-14

R1281 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR OUR TALENTS AND THEIR USE

Exhortation.--"Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord,...that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." "Offer unto the Lord thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

Promise.--"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." "The Lord will give strength unto his people."--Exod. 32:29; Psa. 50:14,15; 29:11.

The dawn of another new year is properly a time for solemn reflections, both retrospective and prospective. In the retrospect how abundant is the cause for thanksgiving. We who have been blessed with the richest favors of divine grace in that knowledge of divine truth which reveals to us the high privilege of becoming sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the called and chosen and faithful according to his purpose, have a never failing cause for deepest gratitude. Great indeed was the favor which revealed to us the hope of everlasting life as justified, human sons of God--of full restitution to the divine favor and likeness, as at first possessed by our father Adam. And great was our joy when first, by faith, we appropriated this precious promise and realized that legally, through merit of the precious blood of Christ shed for our redemption, we had passed from death unto life, and that in God's appointed time the everlasting treasure with all its attendant glory and blessing would be ours. But beyond even this favor are the "exceeding great and precious promises" to those of this justified class who have been called, according to God's purpose, to become the bride and joint-heir of his dear Son.

Then, in addition to all these blessings of hope and promise, was the blessed realization during all the year, and with some of us for many years past, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, as the Psalmist aptly represents the present life, our blessed Shepherd's rod and staff have been our comfort and our safeguard. How often has the friendly crook of the Shepherd's staff stayed us from wandering off into by-paths and kept us in the nar-

row way; how his chastening rod has from time to time aroused us from dreamy lethargy and urged us on our way. And at such times we have recalled the comforting words: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."--Heb. 12:5-8.

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of divine favor, while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that *all things* work together for good to them that love God, we have realized that godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is [so long as God wills to have us remain here], and also of that which is to come. Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives, throughout the year upon which we are just entering. Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today --not in the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you consider yourselves entirely his, and that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year and until it is wholly consumed in his service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day to pay these, our vows of full consecration, unto the Most High.

As we look back and with sorrow view the imperfections of even our best efforts, and then forward and see the lion-like difficulties that seem to obstruct our onward course, we will need greatly to re-inforce our waning courage with the special promises of divine grace to help in every time of need. We have the blessed assurance that "the Lord will give strength unto his people." "Call upon me in

the day of trouble," he says, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." As soldiers under our great Captain, we have enlisted in no uncertain struggle, except our own faint-heartedness or unfaithfulness should make it so. We are fully supplied with the whole armor of God, and will be amply protected against all the fiery darts of the adversary if we will accept it and carefully buckle it on; we are forewarned of all the snares and dangers that beset our onward way, so that we may avoid and overcome them; we are fully informed as to the policy and course of the Captain under whose banners we have enlisted, and of the part we are to take under his leading. We have his constant presence with us, even to the end of our course. His inspiring voice may always be heard above the clash and din of battle -- Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom! Be of good cheer: I have overcome! Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid! Greater is he that is for you than all they that be against you. If we are weak and incline to faint-heartedness we have only to remember the blessed promise, "The Lord will give strength unto his people;" and by our faithfulness in the service we shall glorify God and he will deliver us gloriously from all our foes, both seen and unseen.

HOW SHALL WE PAY OUR VOWS?

This is an important question with all the truly consecrated, and one surely of paramount importance. Let us consider, then, that when we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction--in the service of God, of his plan and of his children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High. He says: "It is like a man who, intending to travel, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his respective capacity; and straightway took his journey."

This master had important and valuable interests to leave in charge of his servants; and as these servants had all engaged to serve him, he had a right to expect of them a sincere and faithful interest in the work. Yet he did not expect more of them than they were severally able to accomplish. He rightly expected larger returns from the one who had five talents than from those who had one or two talents. And in the reckoning, it will be observed that the servant who had doubled his two talents was just as highly commended as the one who had doubled his five. The reply to each was the same--"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And had the servant with the one talent been similarly faithful he would have received the very same commendation. Notice also that the parable does not represent the obligations of the world of mankind in the use of their talents, but merely of "his own servants"--the consecrated believers only. And notice also that no servant was left without some talent of usefulness and responsibility. Each servant had *at least* one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master, and yet he evidently wanted to be considered a servant still, and probably thought he was worthy of commendation and reward for not perverting his Lord's money to other uses. He had taken good care of the talent; he had not turned it in opposition to the Lord, but he had simply buried it-- failed to use it. At the reckoning time, he who had received the one talent said, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an exacting man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou has not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast thine own."

"His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." It will be observed that this servant was not what men would generally call wicked. He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compen-

sation, but lacking any real, active interest in his master's business. He had no ill will toward his master, he was probably very glad that the other servants kept the business from going to wreck and ruin, he did nothing to hinder them from using their talents, but he did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless, slothful servant, he was really a covenant-breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return.

But let us remember that this was not a real case: it was simply a parable used to illustrate real cases. And if the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their responsibilities. Activity in the Lord's service to the full extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be his servants; and it is what he does expect. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can, and all you can, in the great work to which we have already consecrated our lives. And those who have several talents, let them see to it that they too are faithful to the extent of their abilities, not being content to do merely what the one-talented man can do or ought to do. Such a one would not be a good and faithful servant, and could not expect the Master's approving "Well done!" His approval will be given to those only who are faithful to the extent of their opportunity.

Those who find the truth and make the consecration before they are encumbered with the cares of this life, who have no families dependent upon them and who have a reasonable degree of health, have at least two talents--time and health--which can and ought to be utilized in the service to the best possible advantage. Then there are those who have a money talent, or a business talent, and such should consider how these are being used. Are they largely swallowed up in luxuries or a superabundance of the good things of this life, for either self or family? Or are they being laid up as treasures upon earth--in banks, store-houses and investment securities, to enrich and to cultivate the spirit of pride in friends or children, and for them to quarrel over after you are dead?

Our talents for use in the Lord's service consist of all those things and opportunities which are over and above what we need for the necessary and reasonable maintenance of ourselves or our families, if we have families, and the reasonable provision against distress in case of a sudden calamity or approaching old age, etc. Aside from these, all we have should be in active service, be they many talents or few. If we have five talents and are using only one or two, how can we expect the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant." Did we not covenant to give and to use *all* for him?--all our money, all our time, all our influence, all our mental activity, all our physical ability? How faithful have we been during the past year? How do we stand at the bar of our own judgment? And how faithful will we be during the coming year? After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside.

But observe further what the Lord has to say about this "wicked and slothful servant." He says: "Take the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath [made use of his talents] shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not [made use of his talent] shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into *outer darkness*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The *outer darkness* here referred to is in contrast with the inner light of the holy place of favor and communion and instruction from God, symbolized in the Tabernacle. The testing comes on the return of the Master. Then the faithful servants shall enter into fuller joys and privileges and blessings, while the unfaithful will go into the *outer darkness* of error and ignorance concerning God's plans and ways, which envelopes the world in general, and their neglected opportunities for more abundant service will go as a reward to those who are already earnest and active, and whose abundant labors will in due time be abundantly rewarded.

As we thus view our Lord's teaching, we see that our only security as sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ is in activity in the service of the truth. Well, says one, I see very few doing that. Very true: only a few will do it. But that precious few are the Lord's jewels. Are you one of them? Ah, that is the point to be considered. No matter how few they are, or whether you ever saw or knew of any such, that does not alter the conditions of our calling. This is the way: walk ye in it. One, at least, has trodden it before. Look for his

foot-prints and follow him, and "He will give strength unto his people," even though they walk alone, as he did, without the cheering companionship of fellow-travelers.

But think not that you are traveling alone in this narrow way. The Lord has now a consecrated people, a faithful band of servants who, with every talent consecrated, are steadily pursuing their course in the narrow way. We know some of them by name and by character and by their steady and progressive activity in the blessed work. Not many of them have five talents, but a good many have two or three, and some only one. Quietly and unobtrusively they go about from day to day preaching the wonderful words of life, and God is with them and is leading them on. Their hearts are full of joy and hope and they are kept securely amidst all the perils of this evil day. None are so clear in their apprehension and appreciation of truth as those who are fully enlisted in its service. Let all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or our many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family--whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art; or upon business, politics or pleasures; or in pampering pride and appetite--then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness, by being caught in some of the snares of this "evil day," and will be led farther and farther into error and away from truth.

Mark well that it is not a case of such unfaithful servants being liable to get into outer darkness, into error: it is a case of *must*. The Master's orders are peremptory and decisive: "Cast the unprofitable

servant into outer darkness." The light now shining is *not for* the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and sacrifice his conveniences for them, he is unworthy of them and *must* go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. With these as with the world the disappointment of theories and plans in the great time of trouble will ere long bring the weeping and gnashing of teeth foretold.

It is indeed a notable fact that in no single case have we seen one drift away from the truth into the snares of these perilous times who was very active and fully enlisted in the Lord's work, whose one aim and endeavor was to herald the truth and to bless others with it. To such the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"--"Ye shall never fall, for so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us, then, dearly beloved, have for our watchword during the year the word DEVOTION; and let each of us write upon his heart the gracious PROMISE--"The Lord will give *strength* unto his people." Let us be faithfully "his people," and let us earnestly desire and faithfully use the *strength* promised. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it. So, then, if you lack the strength to use faithfully your talent, the fault is yours, not God's. You either have not his service closely enough at heart or else do not make use of the strength he provides. "The Lord will give strength unto *his people*"--his trusting, faithful servants-- those who are using to his praise the talents consecrated to their Master, however many or few those talents may be.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS AND METHODS OF STUDYING THE VOLUMES

1) Study 12 pages a day: The planned completion is 9 months if it is done consistently. This leaves 3 months for going into more depth in selected areas.

2) Study 1 chapter per week: If you count each forward as a chapter and include the tabernacle, the planned completion would be 22 months and 3 weeks. This is just short of 2 years to complete.

STRENGTH OF PRESENT TRUTH VOLUME ONE

A10 "As though by instinct, the whole creation, while it groans and travails in pain, waits for, longs for and hopes for the DAY, calling it the Golden Age; yet men grope blindly, because not aware of the great Jehovah's gracious purposes. But their highest conceptions of such an age fall far short of what the reality will be. The great Creator is preparing a "feast of fat things," which will astound his creatures, and be exceedingly, abundantly beyond what they could reasonably ask or expect. And to his wondering creatures, looking at the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of God, surpassing all expectation, he explains: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8,9

Though in this work we shall endeavor, and we trust with success, to set before the interested and unbiased reader the plan of God as it relates to and explains the past, the present and the future of his dealings, in a way more harmonious, beautiful and reasonable than is generally understood, yet that this is the result of extraordinary wisdom or ability on the part of the writer is positively disclaimed. It is the light from the Sun of Righteousness in this dawning of the Millennial Day that reveals these things as "present truth," now due..."

A348-349 "It will be observed that the di-

vine plan is complete and harmonious with itself in every part, and that it is in perfect harmony with the character which the Scriptures ascribe to its great Author. It is a marvelous display of wisdom, justice, love and power. It carries with it its own evidence of superhuman design, being beyond the power of human invention, and almost beyond the power of human comprehension.

Doubtless questions will arise on various points inquiring for solution according to the plan herein presented. Careful, thoughtful Bible study will settle many of these at once; and to all we can confidently say, No question which you can raise need go without a sufficient answer, fully in harmony with the views herein presented. Succeeding volumes elaborate the various branches of this one plan, disclosing at every step that matchless harmony of which the *truth* alone can boast. And be it known that no other system of theology even claims, or has ever attempted, to harmonize in itself *every* statement of the Bible; yet nothing short of this we can claim for these views. This harmony not only with the Bible, but with the divine character and with sanctified common sense, must have arrested the attention of the conscientious reader already, and filled him with awe, as well as with hope and confidence. It is marvelous indeed, yet just what we should expect of the TRUTH, and of God's infinitely wise and beneficent plan."

VOLUME TWO

B15 "In this volume we offer a chain of testimony on the subject of God's appointed times and seasons, each link of which we consider Scripturally strong, while the whole of it when viewed together, in the relationship which one part bears to another, gives evidence of a plan so broad and comprehensive, a design so deep, and a harmony so perfect, as to clearly manifest to the studious and reverent inquirer that it is beyond the breadth and depth of human thought, and therefore cannot be of human origin."

IMPORTANCE OF FREQUENT AND THOROUGH STUDY OF THE VOLUMES

R4448 "We fear that too many are in this attitude of leaning on others whose fall might bring them disaster.

It is because we have long recognized this principle that, in all of our writings, we have presented the Lord's message as his message, and not as our own; giving the chapter and verse for every doctrine. If any are leaning on us or on anything but the Lord's Word for guidance, we believe that the fault is not traceable to our teachings. We have striven to bring all the members of the Body into direct personal contact with the Head. While not ignoring the value of books and sermons, we have, nevertheless, urged upon all the necessity of proving, to the extent of their ability, every item of Truth which they receive. Notwithstanding this we fear that many of our dear readers lean upon us and upon others. We fully know that we are in the evil day and that the armor which the Lord provided is to be put on individually by each one of his faithful soldiers of the cross...

Divine providence has furnished to the people of God at this time an outline of the Divine Plan and a detail of Bible doctrines such as God's people have never before had in their possession. Without claiming any inspiration for the "Studies in the Scriptures" we surely may claim a Divine supervision in respect to the *matter* which they contain and the *time* of their presentation. Whoever admits that we are in the Harvest time at all--that we have been in it since 1875-- must acknowledge this also. The Lord promised that at this time he would cause his people to sit down to a bountiful repast of spiritual food and that he would be their servant and bring forth to them "things new and old." (Luke 12:37.) All who recognize these things must recognize these "Studies in the Scriptures" as being identified with the fulfillment of that promise. If they are not, how has the promise been fulfilled? It will not do to say that the "Divine Plan of the Ages" and the general elucidation

tion of Divine Truth through those volumes is merely one man's opinion. That would be giving too much honor to any man. No one who understands these things can possibly believe that any man could fabricate a theory which puts all other theories of this and every other day completely into the shadow, as a tallow dip in comparison to the most wonderful are lights of our day.

Neither is there reason or sense in the attempt of some to claim that these "Scripture Studies" are merely a rehash of what has been believed for centuries. True, they present the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, Baptism, etc., etc., but not as they were nor as they are discordantly believed. These books discuss the Bible's presentations and set them in order as showing their *relationship* to each other, as one harmonious whole as never before presented. They are opposed by those who cannot refute them. We repeat, then, that "Studies in the Scriptures" are either of the Lord's providence or else they are a fraud, and at the same time one of the greatest miracles.

The secret of the clearness and power of some who have come recently into the Truth can be traced to the fact that they have been diligently using these Divinely provided helps for Bible study. On the contrary many of those who today are less clear in the Truth than they were years ago owe their loss of spiritual vigor and clear perception of the Truth to the fact that they have neglected this Divine provision for their needs."

R5185 "There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the Truth, as though we had originated the Truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. *The Truth is God's*. He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the Truth of His Plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not *make* that picture. You merely *looked at it*. You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's Plan of the Ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it. Our attitude of mind, then, should be, "Come, we will show you what God has arranged, what God has pictured." Thus we would glorify God and be helpful to others; for to whatever extent we manifest pride or self-consciousness in the Truth, to that extent we do injury to ourselves and to others. The world would say, "We have just as able Doctors of Divini-

ty in our denominations as you have--just as wise to teach us the Truth."

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the very beginning that we are of the right spirit--the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in His Word, concerning which it is His due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties. Now the light is being turned on, and, as the poet has expressed it, "Wonderful things in the Bible we see."

R4685 "We might remark that quite a number of the friends in the Truth are making it a rule to read twelve pages of the *SCRIPTURES 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."

R4684-4686 "The plan of reading twelve pages of the *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* each day, tried by so many, results in more Bible study than any other way that we know of. We believe that it is not so much the time that is given to Bible study, but the amount of study done and the amount of information gained, that counts..."

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 would 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...

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 *SCRIPTURES 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 consider it a Scripture study in any sense of the word unless our thought has grasped the matter from the standpoint of seeking to know what the Scriptures teach and seeking to call to mind these Scriptures that are being explained and to call to mind other texts perhaps, that are not cited, or of which only a small portion is cited.

If one will do all this it will not be merely a reading but a study; and from this standpoint, whoever reads two pages of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES* each day with the suggested passages connected with those two pages, would do more Scripture studying in that time than he could do by any other method. Whenever he reads these pages and calls the corresponding or connecting Scriptures to mind he is drawing from the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, with practically every page he reads. Now is it possible to find any other Bible study that would accomplish so much for us in the same time as this would do? If there is we ought to take it. If there is not, then we have our opinion."

R2662 "I have learned from observation that those who merely read the *DAWNS* [Later renamed *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*] without examining the context of Scriptures quoted do not become well established in the truth, so that when the fire that tries every man's faith becomes more intense, they are unable to endure the ordeal. It has further been my experience that those who state that 'they' have the Bible to read, and that it is sufficient for them without reading the *DAWNS*, never come to a clear knowledge of the truth, because they thereby ignore the instrumentality that God has been pleased to honor in setting forth his truth in these last days.... Yours in our Redeemer, E. J. COWARD, -- Texas."

[A64]

Truth Most Precious

Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,
Such as men give and take from day to day,
Comes in the common walk of easy life,
Blown by the careless wind across our way.

Truth springs like harvest from the well-ploughed fields,
Rewarding patient toil, and faith and zeal.
To those thus seeking her, she ever yields
Her richest treasures for their lasting weal.