

## Meditating on the Word of God

What are the great doctrinal issues the church faces? Writing just before the turn of the century, Dr. James Orr, in his book *The Progress of Dogma*, thought that eschatology (the doctrine of the last things) would be the unique doctrinal problem for modern Christians. Though eschatology is a much debated topic among evangelicals, it is not the key problem today.

Sure, many books on the signs of the times and the second coming of Christ are coming off the press. Evangelical fellowships and churches have even split over the question whether Christ is going to return before or after the great tribulation.

I am convinced that the nature and authority of Scripture will be a matter of much study and debate for years to come. Dr. Lindsell's book *The Battle for the Bible* and the *Symposium God's Inerrant Word*, edited by John Warwick Montgomery, are but a few of the many titles on the book market today.

Books on the nature and authority of Scripture must be written. They are needed to clarify and uphold the historic Christian position on Scripture. The attacks on Scripture must be opposed. But I wonder whether or not we become so absorbed with reading books about the Bible that we have no time to study the Bible. Can we become so uptight in defending Scripture That we have no time to meditate on it?

I fear that the Word of God can become an object of debate instead of a searcher of hearts. Isn't it easier to talk about the Bible than to let the Bible speak to us? Why is it that God's Word can become a mere jungle of words that has little meaning for us? Our familiarity with the Holy One can breed indifference. Perhaps we are too busy to study and pray through Scripture. Or we go through Bible reading sessions like we do with the morning paper. We read the headlines and don't take the time to digest the fine print.

Serious Bible study takes time and effort. When a man reads the Bible in the morning and starts thinking about his shop or the business letter he must write, he has already cut himself off from the opportunity to dialogue with the living God. God simply does not pay attention to half-hearted devotions. God is not a troublesome guest who needs some attention certain times of the day. All I am saying is, the Word of God is demanding. It demands our interest, attention and a period of our time each day. As Christians, we must develop the art of quiet meditation on the Word. Our spiritual fathers spoke of meditation on Scriptures and testified of its benefits. Meditation is the work of the mind.

Is Scripture always "uplifting"? Are our devotions always in the form of an "inspirational quiet time"? Does it always make us happy? It depends on what we mean. When the Word of God speaks to us, we may not always like what it says to us. When God takes hold of a man, he must die first to himself before he can become a new person. As I mirror myself in Scripture, I see my failures and sins, and I must repent.

The Bible is not only a hammer that smashes, but also a powerful medicine for the wounded soul. When we are burdened by the cares and worries of life, the Word of God is a rich source of encouragement. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." That is what the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 27:14.

Take time to hear what God has to say. He doesn't speak to us just in our moments of spiritual exhilaration. We don't have to wait for our dreams or vision to discover what God wants for our lives. He comes to us through the Bible. Wait upon the Lord.

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