

GOD HATH SPOKEN THE LIVING WORD

By Dub McClish

Introduction

From his Roman prison cell, Paul wrote concerning the Gospel, "Wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the Word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9). Paul thus recognized the incomparable glory and power of God's Word. Men may imprison the messenger of God, but they cannot imprison the message.

What is there about the Word of God that makes it so peculiar and unique? Of all of the many descriptions of the attributes of God's Word that one might compile from all of the Bible, the essential characteristics of that Word are found in two contexts in Hebrews epistle. In the majestic, sweeping statement with which the letter begins, the writer speaks of the revealed Word as follows:

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:1–3).

In a subsequent passage the author describes God's Word in the following terms:

For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

From these two passages let us now study several facts about God's Word.

The Source of the Word

"God hath spoken..." The Word of God is just that—the Word of God. It is not the word of a man or of several men, except as men were used as the mediums through which God revealed it. "**God** hath spoken." Until he sent his Son to be his final spokesman, He had revealed His Word a piece at a time and through many prophets in various ways scattered over many centuries. Then He sent His Son and thundered from Heaven that men were now to hear Him (Mat. 17:5). He preached and declared for three and one-half years God's Word that would become effective with His own death on Calvary. He continued speaking the new law of the new spiritual kingdom, His church, through His inspired apostles (John 16:13) and the prophets on whom they laid their hands (Acts 6:5–8). Concerning the human agents through whom God and Christ spoke, Peter says, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

Because **God** has spoken, His Word it is an objective standard. It is objective truth as opposed to subjective opinion. Webster defines “objective” in this sense as “expressing or involving the use of facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices.”¹ Conversely, that which is “subjective” has to do with “experience or knowledge as conditioned by personal mental characteristics or states.”² It is clear from these definitions that God’s Word is objective because it came from and stands outside of, above and beyond, the personal thinking, feelings, and prejudices of men. All of the philosophies, religious ideas and doctrines outside of the objective Word of God are necessarily subjective—originating in the minds of men and colored by their experiences, opinions, feelings, and biases. Perhaps we should move one step further back and give the “devil his due” for originating all false doctrine (John 8:44).

All truth resides in God, whether the specific revealed Truth of his Word that can save our souls (“I am the truth,” Jesus said—John 14:6), or the mathematical and scientific truths that relate to and result from the order of God’s material universe. All matters that constitute truth or fact do so independently of human mind or opinion. It matters not if a man in his subjective prejudices refuses to accept the fact that $2 + 2 = 4$. Nor does it affect the truth of an objective proposition if all men are ignorant of it. The equation, $2 + 2 = 4$ was true from the beginning, even though men possibly did not discover it until some time after creation.

What is true of objective mathematical truth is likewise true of objective, revealed spiritual Truth. All men may reject, ignore, deny or even be guilty of violating God’s Truth on baptism, the church, marriage, divorce and remarriage, or any other subject, but His doctrine remains true and unaffected. Man has more and more come to have a subjective approach to matters of religion. The way neo-Pentecostalism in the mid-1960s swept multitudes of people of all religious persuasions into its stream is a good demonstration of the foregoing observation. The feelings and opinions of men are the only authority in the subjective approach (“I wouldn’t trade this feeling for a stack of Bibles”). Each person thus becomes his own standard, thereby rejecting God’s Word—the only thing worthy of being man’s sole, universal standard. When the “testimony” of personal experiences is valued more than the testimony of God’s Word, one has fallen prey to subjectivism. The Word of God gives us the revealed and confirmed evidence of Christ and his Gospel. It is objective Truth because it is from outside of the minds and opinions of men.

We can easily fall into the subjective trap without realizing it. One of the spiritual songs brethren sometimes sing has the following words: “You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.” I submit that this is pure subjectivism. If this is the proof of the living Jesus then

we have no proof at all! The Muslims or Buddhists could make an equally strong case for their respective deities. Mormons make the same claim as “evidence” of the “inspiration” of their prophet, Joseph Smith. We know Christ lives, not because of the way we “feel” about Him, because of such testimony as the irrefutable evidence of an empty tomb, his post-resurrection appearances to hundreds of credible witnesses, and his ascension into Heaven in the presence of many witnesses. He proved Who He was by His signs and wonders (John 20:30–31). All of these are objective facts recorded in God’s Word. It is because God is the source of the Bible that it constitutes objective Truth—that which is independent of the faulty and fickle feelings and philosophies of men. We seriously damage the case for Truth when we fall into the popular practice of appealing to subjective arguments in an attempt to establish objective Truth.

The Living Word

We would expect the “living God” of Hebrews 3:12 to produce the “living Word” described in Hebrews 4:12. The present participle form (*living*) means that God’s Word perpetually, continually lives. Vincent calls attention to the word order of the Greek text: “Note the emphatic position of *on*, ‘living.’ ‘Living’ is the Word of God...”³ To be ever-living, ever-appropriate, ever-applicable is the very nature of God’s Word. Roman Catholicism’s doctrines of papal and church infallibility are rooted in their negation that the written Word is ever-living: “The Scripture indeed is a divine book, but it is a dead letter....” To them it is “a dead and speechless book.”⁴ Because they deny the life that is in the written Word they justify the need for contemporary sources of an infallible and living message which they satisfy by their infallibility heresies. Many Protestant theologians have joined this attitude of relegating God’s Word to the distant past as some sort of relic that is no longer relevant because of the technologies, sophistications, and cultural changes of modern times. (What a convenient way of dispensing with the prohibitions, disciplines, and requirements of the Bible!)

If the Bible is not a **living** message that will never be obsolete or outmoded, then it is certainly a fraud, because it claims such life for perpetuity. Peter wrote concerning the life that the Word of God possesses:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth (1 Pet. 1:22–23).

Jesus plainly pictured the Word as seed: “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). The efficacy, the essential quality of seed, is the spark of life that is in it. Only by this quality does it produce life and more seed containing more life. That which is non-living can never produce life

or living matter (although evolutionists are forced to claim the contrary by their denial of God). The conclusion follows that if the Word of God is dead, then the religion of Christ is dead. That which is dead cannot produce life, whether it be animal, vegetable, or spiritual. Men cannot manufacture any seed with life in it. God alone holds the secret of life, and He alone is able to invest seed with it. Herein is the secret of the living and abiding character of the Word of God—it is full of life and can give life because it is from God rather than men. Jesus' own summary statement of this essential nature of his word proclaims: "the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63).

Cook's comments are well stated and timely:

That word did not speak to one generation and then die out. The "word" of the "living God" could not become a dead letter. As His creative word continues immanent in the natural world from age to age, so does His word of promise in the spiritual world.⁵

He who would make God's Word a "dead letter" or a mere curiosity piece of more primitive times to be relegated to a museum destroys not only that Revelation, but the God-ordained religion it alone can produce. We will not let blind, unbelieving, ignorant and evil men, regardless of how sophisticated and scholarly they claim to be, rob us of our well-founded faith in God's **living** Word!

The Active Word

God's Word is not only living, but "active" ("powerful," KJV). *Energes* is the word here used. It is rendered "effectual" in Philemon 1:6 and 1 Cor. 16:9. Harper's Lexicon defines *energes* as follows: "Active, Philem. 1:6; efficient, energetic, Heb. 4:12; adapted to accomplish a thing, 1 Cor. 16:9."⁶ From this definition it is apparent that it carries the idea not only of being active and working, but capable or powerful enough to do what it is designed to do. Our English words, *energy*, *energetic*, and *energize* are based upon this word. William Barclay comments on the family of words of which *energes* is a member, as follows:

The more we study this group of words, the more the same idea keeps recurring, the idea of action, strong and powerful, and above all effective. Again and again the idea of power and the idea of purpose achieved meet in these words. And that is most suggestive when we go on to see that in the New Testament these are the characteristic words for the action of God.⁷

God's Word is powerful with the sense of raw force or ability: this seems to be Paul's meaning in his reference to the power of the Gospel in Romans 1:16. However, it is more than raw force. It is force and ability with an end and with the capability of accomplishing its design. What is the aim or design of God's Word? There are actually several such aims for God's revealed Truth.

Direction

“O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Since man does not know innately how he should live, God gave his Word to direct us: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105).

Prevention of Sin

“Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11). The person who feeds on God’s Word and constantly adds to the cache of that Truth will be spared many a grievous and painful fault.

Correction of sin

In spite of the best the best of men can do we will still sin and stand in need of correction. God’s Word is to be preached in such a way that it will “... reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Scripture is profitable “... for reproof, for correction...” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Sanctification, Cleansing from Sin

The means by which the church is sanctified and cleansed is by its members having received the “...washing of water with the word” (Eph. 5:26). The Word is the means by which men learn they must be baptized in water for their cleansing and sanctification in the blood of Christ. Jesus’ own words on this subject are “He that believeth [i.e., the Gospel] and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Salvation

Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel is the medium through which man is instructed in the means of appropriating the redeeming blood of Christ to his sinfulness. Did we not have its instructions we would have no way of knowing how our sins could be forgiven.

Spiritual Maturity

I believe Peter has God’s Word in view when he refers to the “spiritual milk” which will enable us to “grow thereby unto salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2). The writer to the Hebrews also relates the spiritual diet of God’s Word to spiritual growth, discernment and maturity (Heb. 5:12–14).

Engaging the Enemies of Truth

Faithful soldiers of the cross employ “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17) in fighting the “good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). The Word of God is our only weapon in this spiritual struggle for the minds and lives of men: “For though we walk in the flesh,

we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds)” (2 Cor. 10:3–4).

God’s Word has the energy, the capability, the effectiveness to accomplish all of these things that He has designed it to do. However, it cannot do its work if it is not allowed to do so, which implies that there are certain things that may destroy the power and effectiveness of God’s Word. For example:

Ungodly Influence

Our lives should “...adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit. 2:10). Our daily behavior will either make the Gospel more attractive and desirable to others or it will cause men to despise it. If we live in ungodliness and worldly lusts (v. 12) we destroy the power and effectiveness of the Truth among those who know us. We are to live such pure lives that the doctrine and Word of God will not be blasphemed because of us (1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:5).

Silence

It matters not how strong the salt may be, if it is left in the shaker it will not enhance the flavor of food; its effectiveness is neutralized. It matters not how potent a medicine may be, if it is never ingested or applied, its remedial power is rendered impotent. Likewise, with all of the power the Gospel has, if we keep it hidden by our silence we rob it of its potential and we prevent its effectual work. We must use every honorable medium at our disposal to publish and proclaim the blessed Gospel. We must speak to one at a time or to 1,000 at a time, whichever opportunities are ours, so that the Gospel can work, be activated, and have its mighty power unleashed on the hearts of men.

“Helping God”

Ironically, the very ways in which some are presently trying to “help God” are ways which rob the Gospel of its power. Some seem to believe that the Gospel doesn’t have the power it claims for itself, so they resort to secular and materialistic motivations to attract people. While granting that some may have a noble end in view in using such things as highly structured social and recreational programs in the local church, the end has never justified the means in the Lord’s work.

Others are trying to help God out of a “jam” by “streamlining” the Truth as it is taught and preached. They live and are apparently ready to die by the credo, “Make everyone feel good about themselves, don’t arouse any guilt, don’t preach anything controversial, emphasize only positive elements, and never preach longer than 20 minutes.” Unfortunately, the very things that

some are now “streamlining” out of the Gospel are its elements of reproof, rebuke, and correction. These are all “negative” elements in their view (inspired men apparently never viewed them as such) and are to be passed over as completely undesirable. After all, we must never say anything, regardless of how true or needful that might offend the most sensitive soul!

The devil has unleashed a new breed of preachers and elders among us over the past half century. Some are apparently afraid of their own shadows, others seem not to know what the Gospel is, and others know it and despise it. I am utterly amazed at the blind spots some of our preachers and elders seem to have. For example, several years ago a preacher wrote to me, chastising me for being “caustic” and “rude” in a statement I had written in the church bulletin. Among other things, he said, “Our Lord found frequent occasion to take the scribes and Pharisees to task for their ungodly stances. On none of those occasions did he ever stoop to rudeness.” He also cited 1 Corinthians 13:5, which says that love “doth not behave itself unseemly....”

Now I doubt that the scribes and Pharisees would have agreed that Jesus never “stooped to rudeness” after His tongue-lashing recorded in Matthew 23. I reminded my forgetful and immature critic that the same apostle who wrote 1 Corinthians 13:5 also called Elymas the Sorcerer a man “...full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness...” (Acts 13:10). I suspect that Elymas considered Paul somewhat “caustic” and “rude.” Yet, my words in no way approached the severity of either Jesus’ or Paul’s denunciations. (All I did was call the *Firm Foundation* journal the “flimsy foundation.”) How is it that supposedly intelligent people can see only what they want to see in Christ and his faithful contemporaries—things that agree with their spiritual disease of hyper-tolerance. Their spiritual “sugar” level is so high that they may be aptly labeled “spiritual diabetics.”

If such brethren had constituted the company of the apostles on Pentecost the murderous Jews would have left the occasion feeling rather good about themselves. If the apostles had been of the type of many of our elders and preachers, those men of old would never have been arrested, imprisoned, beaten, and commanded to preach no more in the name of Christ (Acts 4:3–21; 5:17–41). They would never have preached anything to upset the Sanhedrin in the first place. Or, upon learning that they were doing so, they would have ceased—with their apologies. Those poor old apostles, and what about Stephen? They just did not know any better than to call *murder* “murder” and *rebellion against the Holy Spirit* “rebellion against the Holy Spirit” in such terms that they could not be misunderstood. Think of all of the

suffering, humiliation, and mistreatment they could have avoided had they just been as smart as many of our present-day elders and preachers.

Why can't we learn that the power and effectiveness is in the Word only when we faithfully, boldly, and lovingly declare the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)? The more we try to help God out by delivering polite little speeches laden with pop psychology rather than with Scripture so as not to offend anyone, the more we rob the Gospel of its power. The fact is, when we emphasize only the soft, sweet, and easy things, even if they are true to the Gospel, we are not preaching the soul-saving, living, and active Word. We are rather preaching a "different Gospel" about which Paul warned in Galatians 1:6–9.

One of the saddest things about this "sweet and smooth" movement among us is the following: these suave, sweet-talking, promoter-type preachers have deceived themselves into believing that the large crowds some of them are able to draw are being attracted to the Gospel and the Lord. The crowds and acclaim convince them that they are doing God's will, but they are dead wrong. If they want to challenge me I dare them to do the following: preach one true-to-the-Gospel sermon at least 40 minutes long on either "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" or on "The Sins of Social Drinking, Dancing, and Wearing Immodest Apparel." They will quickly see that their crowds have not been drawn to the Gospel or to the Lord, but to the "charisma" and "dynamism" of the men themselves or to the easy-come, easy-go, do-what-you-want-to message they have been preaching. I tell you, there is not enough spiritual power in such a message as I have described to lift a feather in a vacuum, much less to convert men and women and fit them for Heaven! As a result it is evident that many congregations are nearer the spiritual cesspool of denominationalism than they are to New Testament Christianity. Many others have set their sails in that direction, and if they don't change course soon, that same destination is certain for them. More than a few have already taken the full plunge.

I appeal for the return to preaching the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. This includes the parts that lift us up to heaven with hope and joy in the salvation and service of Christ. This also includes the parts that expose sin and error in all men (whether ourselves or those outside of Christ) and brings trembling souls to the foot of the cross, guilt-stricken, miserable, and ready to repent. Such was the power of this balanced message in the first century that its thrust was felt all the way to Caesar's household (Phi. 4:22). Such was the power of this rediscovered, restored message of Truth in the first half of the 19th century in our young nation that it dominated the religious skyline. Brethren, the power to accomplish its God-

ordained ends is still in that Word because the life is still there. Why can't we be content to preach it faithfully and fully and let it do its powerful work?

The Sharp Word

In a most expressive figure, Hebrews 4:12 compares the Word of God to a sword, an offensive weapon of war. This is another reminder that God's people are in a war, a death-struggle, and our faithfulness in combat will determine not only our own eternal victory, but perhaps that of many others. Therefore, we must "war the good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18), as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). In preparing for battle we have many pieces of helpful armor, but only one weapon—the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). However, we need none other, for it is abundantly adequate to teach, reprove, correct, instruct, rebuke and exhort (2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2). God's Word, under the figure of a sword, is described as to its mighty capabilities.

It Is Sharp

It is not merely a single-bladed instrument, but one with a keen edge on both sides. Such an instrument is able to pierce and cut in all directions and to do so deeply and quickly. God's Word is even sharper than such a finely honed double-edged combat sword. This same striking figure was seen in John's visions of Christ on Patmos: "...and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword..." (Rev. 1:16; cf. 19:15).

It Pierces

Its penetrating power is due to its keen double-edged "blade." Luke describes those on Pentecost and in Stephen's audience as "pricked in their heart" and "cut to the heart," respectively (Acts 2:37; 7:54).

It Divides

As a literal sword partitions the living flesh of its victim as it penetrates, so the Word of God is so powerfully effective and sharp as to penetrate and divide matters within the depths of man's spiritual nature. "Joints and marrow" are obviously not to be taken literally for two reasons: (1) They are not in contact with one another—the marrow is inside the bones which are connected at the joints; (2) The spiritual sword does not have any effect upon the physical structure of man's body. *Joints and marrow* is a figurative reference to the innermost recesses of man's spiritual nature. "The word of God...divides and lays bare the soul and spirit even to the extent of their joints and marrows."⁸

It Discerns

Discern is from *kritikos*, “skilled in judging,”⁹ From this word we get *critic*, *criticize*, and *critical*. Another Greek authority wrote:

...the usual New Testament meaning being “to sift out and analyze evidence.” In the word *kritikos*, the ideas of discrimination and judgment are blended. Thus, the Word of God is able to penetrate into the furthestmost recesses of a person’s spiritual being, sifting out and analyzing the thoughts and intents of the heart.¹⁰

The searching and judging power of God’s Word is such that it penetrates and exposes the depths of the inner man. It is that “mirror of the soul” (Jam. 1:23–25) that does not deceive us when we gaze into it. It is only by knowledge of the Word of God that we have our “...senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

When the sword pierces and discerns, either of two results will obtain. The sharp, piercing, dividing, discerning sword of God’s Word did its work on Pentecost. Those who were “pricked in their heart” by it immediately realized their guilt and cried out, “What shall we do” (Acts 2:37)? The same sharp sword did its work on Stephen’s audience and they were “cut to the heart” as the faithful words of the evangelist found their mark. However, rather than repenting of the sins of which Stephen’s words convicted them, they violently seized the preacher and stoned him to death. Some who are pierced by the sword of the Spirit rebel, even violently at times, while others are brought to humbly seek peace with God by conformity to his will. However, in both reactions the discerning power of God’s Word in the spirit of man is clearly demonstrated. Again, if we preach a spineless, diluted message that is purposely designed not to stir guilt in the vilest sinner, we rob it of its discerning power.

The Lord’s sharp sword does its work on man’s spiritual nature. I agree with Milligan’s summary of the sword’s piercing and dividing work:

The separation takes place within the region of the soul and the region of the spirit; not between them. The living word cleaves and lays bare all parts of the soul and all parts of the spirit, even to the extent of their joints and their marrows; so that all the perfections and imperfections of man’s spiritual nature are made perfectly manifest. And not only so, but even the thoughts and purposes of his heart are by this infallible Judge, fully analyzed and perfectly classified.¹¹

The Completed Word

After summarizing the way God had in earlier ages revealed his will to men, the Hebrews writer then said that God “hath ... spoken unto us in his Son” (Heb. 1:1–2). The inspired writer makes it clear that the last medium of God’s revelation to man was his Son.

God's Son taught and preached constantly during the last years of his earthly life, ever conscious that he was revealing the Father's will ("For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" John 12:49). Moreover, Christ was aware that His Word was God's final revelation. Thus He said that men who reject His Word will eventually be judged by it (John 12:48).

In giving God's final revelation to men, Christ not only spoke much of it personally, but he also employed other worthy men through whom he spoke. The twelve apostles were granted at least some measure of inspiration to equip them for their very first preaching assignment to the Jews alone: "... for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Mat. 10:19–20). Later, as the Lord tried to prepare them for his fast-approaching departure from them, he promised them more specifically, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things so ever he shall hear, these shall he speak: And he shall declare unto you the things that are to come" (John 16:13).

Christ also empowered the apostles so that they could confer the gift of inspiration as well as other miraculous abilities on certain others (Acts 6:1–8; 8:6-8; 8:14-19; 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6; et al.). Such explains how Mark, Luke, and James could write by inspiration while not being apostles. It also explains how other first-century brethren could prophesy. Let it be clearly noted that the work of all of the New Testament writers is quite accurately termed the work of the Son, for it was work done by his command and power—through His agency. Let it also be noted that all of the non-apostolic New Testament books (Mark, Luke, Acts, James) were written no later than A.D. 70, giving them ample time to have been renounced and repudiated by the apostle John had they been uninspired. Yet, history shows that they were freely accepted as inspired accounts and for this reason are incorporated into the New Testament canon.

Perhaps the most significant thing to note about the promise of inspiration to the apostles is the phrase, "... when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). This promise demands the following: (1) The Spirit was going to come upon the apostles at a certain time, (2) from the time of the coming of the Spirit upon them until sometime before all of the apostles died (Christ made this promise exclusively to them), He would guide them into all the Truth, and (3) therefore, all of God's revelation through his Son was completed before the last apostle died. There are only three other possible conclusions, one or more of which must be accepted by those who deny that revelation ends with the Book of Revelation: (1) Christ was sincere in his promise, but he was honestly mistaken, (2) Christ was

a false prophet and knew that he was deceiving the apostles, (3) or Christ's promise is true, but some of the original apostles are still living. If one accepts either of the first two possibilities then Christ is disqualified as man's Savior. If one accepts the third possibility he is insane.

We not only have the living, active, keen-edged Word of God through his Son, but we also have his completed, final Word. Just as God did not call any of the angels "Son" (Heb. 1:5), and Moses said nothing of priests from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14), so God said nothing of Muhammad, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, the Roman popes, nor any others since the close of the apostolic age, as those through whom He would speak. The truth is, we have God's Word—his final Word, "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3)—in the New Testament. There has been no further word from God and there shall be no further word. All who deny this truth are victims of nothing less than infidelity.

Conclusion,

The beauty, glory, power, and indestructability of the everlasting Word of God elevate it above the best that men can ever fashion. Let us handle it reverently, study it diligently, believe it hopefully, obey it faithfully, and communicate it accurately. Only when we do so will we both save ourselves and those who hear us (1 Tim. 4:16).

Endnotes

1. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1970), p. 581.
2. *Webster's*, op. cit., p. 874.
3. M.R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Mac Dill Air Force Base, FL: MacDonald Pub. Co., n.d.), p. 1113.
4. O. C. Lambert, *Catholicism Against Itself* (Winfield, AL: O.C. Lambert, 1954), vol. 1, p. 25.
5. F.C. Cook, ed., *The Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), vol. 10, pp. 48–49.
6. *An Analytical Greek Lexicon* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), p. 139.
7. William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1971), p. 81.
8. Robert Milligan, *The New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1963), Vol. 9, p. 140.
9. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1932), Vol. 5, p. 363.
10. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Hebrews in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI : Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1956), p. 89.
11. Milligan, op. cit.

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