

# THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN - THE LIVING WORD

**By F. M. Perry**

This morning we noted that the institutions of this world are daily being “shaken.” They rise, they fall. They change. Nations come. Empires come. Then they fall. Man-made religions come and go. This world on which we live is subject to earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, tornados, hurricanes, floods. Men generally like to put their trust in material things. But regularly these material things are shaken up. Men suffer sicknesses, accident, loss of job and income. As children we depend upon our mothers and fathers. But, lives are soon spent and mothers and fathers are gone. Friends and relatives of this world disappear. We live our lives as if this earthly existence is all that matters. But after awhile our fleshly lives are gone. If the material world has been upper most in our lives, where are we when we shed this material body and this material world?

But men need to know that there are eternal beings created by an eternal God. We need to be properly oriented in our eternal environment. We need to know and understand that God has created us in His own image and has furnished us not only with the material things of this world which are fleeting, and regularly shaken, but with things that cannot be shaken. God has created us in an eternal environment and he has given us some eternal things that will last with us (and for us) throughout eternity.

Many of us become skeptical about this world as we see almost everything crumble about us at one time or another. But there are things existing with us now that nothing in this material world can shake. These things are the most important things in our lives. They can give us a firm foundation on which to conduct our fleshly lives. They give us a perspective on which to base the decisions of our lives. They tell about our part in God’s eternal purpose.

Again, let me mention the three things that absolutely cannot be shaken:

The living Godhead.

The living Word.

The living Church.

These are three basic, unshakeable things, the knowledge of which comprise good news (the gospel) for us.

The Bible reminds us, and we can see the truth of it all around us, that we are living in a dying world. Sin is the real Monarch of this earth. Everywhere we see the evidence of "him", mentioned in the Hebrew letter, (Heb. 2:14) who has the power of death, that is, the devil. The Roman letter reminds us (Rom. 5:17) that "by the transgression of the one, death reigned" in this world, and still does over everything in the world. For "death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Rom 5:12).

We are also reminded by the Roman letter (Rom. 3:10-12) that "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." **THIS IS THE TERRIBLE CONDITION OF THE WORLD TODAY.** This is our condition if we do not have Christ as our savior.

In this kind of condition the scripture says we have become useless. We are useless, but God can make us useful if we seek out the unshakable things such as the Living Godhead, the Living Word, and the Living Church.

Today's subject: The Living Word.

Today in the midst of this dying world, there is something that defies and resists the powers of the devil. It is the written Word of God, the Bible. It throws out a challenge to the hand of death. As the Living Word of the Living God it is incorruptible and indestructible.

It has been attacked without mercy. The devil, wielding his influence

over individuals and groups and nations, has tried over and over again to destroy the Bible. And he is still trying. Today he seeks to destroy the authority of the Bible by sowing seeds of doubt and distrust in the minds of men. But today, the Bible proclaims louder than ever that it is the Living Word ; and it will not be destroyed. Above all the turmoil and strife of this in world, this book cries out for all to hear: "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass, The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord abides forever." And Peter adds, "And this is the word which was preached to you." (1 Peter 1:24-25).

The Living Word is the Word of the Living God.

God and His Word are inseparable; both are everlasting. We have a complete revelation from God given to us in the Bible, but we must remember that this was only made possible because "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And Peter tells us, in 2 Peter 1:21, "Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." These men who spoke did not always understand the word they spoke. But they searched for its significance as Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 1:10-11, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

The prophets did not always understand the word they brought. Peter, perhaps is the best one to teach us this lesson. For Peter, on the day of Pentecost, spake from God by the Holy Spirit, giving the very first gospel message under the New Covenant, yet he required a sign from God to make him understand that the Gentiles were to be heirs of the same Kingdom and promise. Peter required a further sign even though he, himself, had stated, Acts 2:39, "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

So we see the importance to be attached to this Living Book. It is not the word of man, but the Divinely inspired Word of God. Over and over

again we read, "The Word of the Lord came to"... someone. Moses was promised that God would be with his mouth, and God would teach him what to say (Exodus 4:12). Jeremiah, too, in protesting to God of his lack of speech and of his childishness, was told: "Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." (Jer. 1:6-7).

Many reject the idea that men spake as the Lord commanded and try to persuade us that God only implanted thoughts into mens minds, and then they interpreted the thoughts as they pleased. Yet, how could man understand God's thoughts without words. How can God's thoughts be transmitted to us without words? God used men as His mouth, and thus has given to us an infallible word. If thoughts only were given, why did God say: "These are the words which ye shall speak?" (Exodus 19:6). Why did Moses write, "All the words of the Lord," Or why did the people shout, "All the words which the Lord hath said we will do?" (Exodus 24:3-4).

In our individual study of this Book, we must all come to the conclusion that this Living Word is the Word of God.

The Written Word and the Incarnate Word Are Both Living.

We have been speaking of the Bible as the Living Word. In scripture, Christ himself is often called the Word and spoken of as The Word Incarnate. John 1: 1-2 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." John 1: 14 says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

We sometimes differentiate between the Bible and Christ, both known as the Word, by calling the Bible the written Word, and by calling Christ the Incarnate Word (that is, the Word in the flesh of men). But here again, we have two inseparable Words. The written and the incarnate word are so identified in scripture, that it is not always clear as to which is referred. Of each, the same things are said. Both express to mankind

the knowledge of the invisible and the inaccessible God.

Paul said to Timothy in 2 Tim. 3: 16-17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." This passage gives the correct order in which God's written Word works. The written Word teaches what is good for all mankind, both in the material and spiritual life; it reproves that which is wrong, it gives suitable correction, and it continues to instruct so that correction may be maintained until we arrive at that stage where we are equipped for every good work. Surely it requires a Living Word to do this.

In like manner the Incarnate Word appeared on this earth to demonstrate how this can be accomplished. He entered into our life, wearing our nature, was tempted and tried in all points as we are, yet was without sin. He fulfilled to the letter the commandments of the written Word. Thus the Incarnate Word and the written Word combined present both example and precept. Both must be together. Combined they demonstrate the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Thus we see the living attributes of the written and the Incarnate Word, which is able to impart life to us, that we may walk in that new and living way that leads to life eternal.

Heb. 4:12 says, "The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Here is a glimpse of the living and active power of both the written and the incarnate Word, which can penetrate the thoughts and intentions of our hearts and disclose us as we really are. If we are to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," then we must heed that which has been given to us for instruction and guidance, This Living Word.

Fleshly Israel failed to be led to God because they read the scriptures

with veiled face. They colored the word of God so with their own thoughts and intentions that they could not understand. They were looking for a Messiah who would come into a material Kingdom, sitting upon a material throne, in a material Jerusalem, and from there rule all the nations of the earth. As they searched the written Word, they were so ruled by their own desires that they were not able to understand that the Word spoke of One who would come to inaugurate a spiritual kingdom, with a heavenly Mount Zion and a heavenly Jerusalem, the pain and suffering of Calvary. Had they understood what they read, they all would have been led to accept the Living Christ.

What does this teach us about how we should study the Living Word today? We must accept it as it is, teaching to a true knowledge of what it will. We must not approach it with preconceived notions learned from the world. The world would have us believe that the early characters of the Bible were only legendary and not real, that the record of Jonah and the fish is simply fable and allegory. Many of the world would approach the Word of God with the preconceived notion that our Lord could have been nothing more than a good man. Let us not deny the Living Power of the Word of God even before and as we look into it. But let us do as the Bereans did, "Search the scriptures daily," drinking in with profit the great teachings, that we may learn to live that life well pleasing to God, a life that will lead into that fuller and more abounding life hereafter.

There Is Everlasting Life In the Word.

God brought this universe and all life into being through His Word. Heb. 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." Life comes from life. In no other way does life come into being except from other life. So all life came into being through God's Living Word. Paul said that the incarnate Word, "Our Savior Christ Jesus ... abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." God decreed, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, Hear Him." (Ma t t. 17: 5).

The Is Life In the Word.

To discard the written Word is to discard Life eternal. For the Written Word brings us the message of God's last Messenger to earth. In John 3:36 Jesus Himself said, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who disbelieves the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." To believe on the Son we must accept the testimony of the Living Word. John 5:24 says, "He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

All life consists of three great stages: birth, growth, and completion. So also our spiritual life. And the Living Word operates in all three aspects of our spiritual life. Birth is brought about in the spiritual life by the "word of truth" which is the seed of the Kingdom. (Luke 8:11). Paul tells us how the children of God were begotten through the gospel. (1 Cor 4: 15). James tells us that "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." (James 1:18). Peter says: "For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God." (1 Peter 1:23).

Accepting the Word of God into our hearts and obeying it, we enter into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, being accepted as children of God. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Gal. 3:26-27). Growth of the spiritual life is brought about by the Living Word, which is "the pure milk of the Word," (1 Pet. 2:2) for the new born babes, and the strong meat for those of a more mature age. (Heb. 5: 14). Just as we must eat to live in this life, so we must feed upon the Living Word to live and grow in the spiritual life. "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt 4:4).

Let us be as consistent with our eating of spiritual food as we are of the material food, and we shall grow up in all aspects into Him. (Eph 4:15).

What an abounding storehouse is supplied for us in the Living Word. There are no restrictions or rationing. There is enough for all and to spare. All who ask, receive. All who seek, find; and all who knock, find

a welcome admission.

The completed Christian Life is also supported by the Living Word. The glorious future promised to every believing child of God is a home with the Lord Jesus forever, where the one whom we now serve in faith, shall be seen face to face (1 John 3: 2); where the hope of eternal life shall receive blessed fulfillment; where love shall be everlasting. We ought to press on with eager steps, being built up and encouraged by this Living Word of God.

The Living Word is Never Exhausted.

Unlike man-made books, Gods Word is always fresh, no matter how often we open it. The same passage will still give more light and understanding to us after we have read it and meditated upon it a thousand times. God's word touches the deep things of God, things about which man knows but very little, and things known only to God Himself. Hence, when we read we have opened up before us a vast expanse of wisdom and knowledge. In this life we can only touch the fringes of this truth. The Living Word is ever up-to-date, never needs replenishing, but gives a light to every age. Let us lay up in our hearts the teachings of this Living Word, and let us give practical expression to our convictions of its truth and power. "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgements and unfathomable His ways." (Romans 11:33).

We have noted that the Living Word is the Word of The Living God. We have noted that the Written Word and the Incarnate Word are both Living. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. As we drink of the Written Word, it can enter into our new man and dwell within us, living on in our lives. All work together, the Living God, the Living Christ, the Living Spirit, and the Living Word.

We have noted that The Everlasting Life is in the Word. The Word brought all things into existence. The Word succors us in this life and supports us in the completion of this life. And we have noted that the Living Word is never exhausted. There is always something there for



us to learn,

Friends, The Living Word has brought us the Good news. Surely there is no one here who has not heard the gospel message in some form. The Living Word brings good news. You do not have to die in your sins! Isn't that good news? There are things with us that cannot be shaken. One of them is the Living Word which tells us about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through obedience to Christ, we can live a life that in the end, cannot be shaken either. If we will believe on Christ, repent of our sins, confess him before men, and be baptized, he has told us through the living Word that we will gain life eternal. Death will no longer hold dominion over us. Friends, let this Living Word feed you in this life. Obey it. Even today, you can complete your birth into the Spiritual life. You can come forward at this very time, if you will, and say by that action that I believe and I have repented. Now I want to confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and I want to be born by baptism into the Spiritual life. Won't you do it today?

Friends, whatever your condition before God, turn to the Living Word. Let it teach you, let it create in you a new person. And let us help one another.

(This sermon was delivered by F. M. Perry in Herndon, Virginia in Sept. 1969; in Bangkok, Thailand in March 1973; and in Front Royal, Virginia in 1977.)