

# **SEARCHINGS OF SCRIPTURE, AND ITS TEACHINGS**

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Searchings of Scripture, and Its Teachings by A Layman

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**A LAYMAN**

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SCRIPTURE, AND  
ITS TEACHINGS**



SEARCHINGS OF SCRIPTURE,  
AND  
ITS TEACHINGS.

COMMENDED TO CHRISTIANS GENERALLY, BUT MORE  
ESPECIALLY TO THE YOUNG.

BY  
A LAYMAN.

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES"—JOHN 7. 32.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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"The entrance of Thy Word giveth light."—Ps. cxix. 130.

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THIS little work, unpretending as are its merits, goes forth as a *homage to the Bible*. Its title expresses its character and design; its original gatherings were gleaned out of the field of "the Word," from a period commencing more than half a century back, while the writer was yet in the morning of his days. But the transcript into the method of this little volume had been proceeded with only in part when great increase of professional avocations, and other circumstances, led to its suspension during the past five and thirty years. Comparative leisure having been since permitted, the remainder of the contents has been recently transcribed. As may be imagined, the publication of this early exercise was never contemplated, it having been engaged in merely for personal profiting; but, as several valued friends have urged the author to send it to the press, in the idea that, however humble its character, yet as a testimony to the value of searching the Scriptures in early life, it may stimulate some youthful minds to adopt that practice, it is,

with much diffidence, submitted to young persons of the present day, in the hope of ministering to their esteem for the Bible, at a period when such daring assaults are ventured against the sacred record; and, especially, as it is believed that, notwithstanding the existence of works of much higher value, there is no other little compilation of an exactly similar character now extant.

Sending the work out, therefore, with this design, it may be useful to state the occasion and manner of its construction. Led by the good providence of God, and the loving care of wise parents, from a child to attend the courts of the Lord, the Saviour's command to "Search the Scriptures" was early impressed. A peculiar influence, also, about this time, was occasioned by the then recent rise of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

In these circumstances, while yet under school tuition, and residing beneath the parental roof, the habit commenced, as opportunity afforded, of meditating on God's word.

On exchanging school duties for his earliest official engagements, an hour daily in the morning was secured, and the Bible became more carefully read, *rather searched and studied*, on a consecutive plan, embracing its whole contents, with the habit of meditation and prayer over the sacred page, and with reference to personal application for spiritual improvement, looking for and seeking the gracious teaching of the divine Spirit and His promised blessing (Luke xi. 18).

Then, in order to record the truths and instructions of the divine word, two common copy-books were provided,—one paged alphabetically, the other left free for miscellaneous subjects,—and to these copy-books the several facts, doctrines, and topics were committed, as they were



suggested to the mind from the portion under study, accumulating texts being added from time to time by diligent attention in the daily perusal ; thus increasing and amplifying the evidences upon the several subjects.

It will therefore be observable that the doctrines, duties, and lessons thus gathered and recorded were simply and exclusively drawn from Scripture, as no commentary was consulted at the period in question, simply an old concordance and dictionary of the Bible having been occasionally referred to. The writer thankfully, indeed, admits that the sound scriptural teaching he heard, Sabbath after Sabbath, from the pulpit of St Ann's, Blackfriars, then occupied by the late excellent and gifted Rev. Wm. Goode, very greatly enabled him to receive the spiritual verities of the holy book, and it must ever be an immense benefit to the student of God's word when he enjoys pure scriptural teaching on the Sabbath. But even, if so circumstanced, that he is denied that privilege, the Bible diligently studied in the manner and spirit already described cannot fail of being attended with a blessing.

The advantages will be many and great ; the chief result to be desired must doubtless be the attainment of knowledge unto life eternal, through faith in Christ Jesus, the divine Saviour. Then, the study of God's word will be one of the best preservatives from the temptations to which the young, especially young men, are exposed. It is too possible, we know, for attendance at church or chapel on the Sabbath to occur in a heedless manner, and, alas ! for habits of inconsistency to be entertained in the week ; but it is next to an impossibility to maintain the practice of daily searching God's word with earnest prayer and self-application, and indulge in any known sinful course. " How shall

a young man cleanse his way but by taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (Ps. cxix. 9).

Considering, for instance, the subject of purity, what a wholesome support, even to virtuous principles, are such warnings as those found in the following passages, viz. :— Gal. v. 19–21, Eph. v. 5, 6. So, with other evil allowances, those habits cannot be followed along with conscientious, *persevering*, prayerful regard to God's word.

Not a small benefit will likewise result from the correct taste that will be induced with respect to general reading ; much precious time, often consumed on books that tend to enervate the mind by their false, frivolous, or illusive views of life, will be gained to useful and improving, as well as entertaining literature.

Then, again, there will be nourished eminently all those principles of truth, blamelessness, integrity, and diligence, that best promote success in life and social happiness ; for surely, both the obvious tendency of such moral cultivation, as well as blessings spiritually attached thereto, in God's word, give the hopeful expectation that it shall be well with those who thus seek the Lord.

The author of this little work would, indeed, gratefully testify, in his own case, how much advantage such engagement confers. Jointly, he considers, to an undeviating regard for Sabbath duties (never wilfully infringed), and the continued practice of Scripture investigation, in his youthful days, are mainly to be ascribed (as means) every upholding mercy, and every prospering condition of his earthly course. And, humbling as may be the recollection of innumerable failings and shortcomings under so great privileges,—conscious, also, as he must be of transgressions that constrain to deep self-abasement before the eye of

Omniscience,—yet, in the experience and remembrance of providential goodness and preserving grace, would he exclaim, “The Lord hath been mindful, and He doth still bless.” Bless the Lord, O my soul!

To the young readers of these lines, it is counselled that by far the most profiting time for Biblical study is in the morning; an hour, or even half an hour, secured by earlier rising, is invaluable; and even in a winter’s morning the earnest inquirer may shelter himself against any moderate difference of temperature by suitable extra apparel for the hour.

Again, your progress, young friends, will be gradual, but the work, and your ability for it, will grow, and your delight in it also. How improving and interesting the pleasing task to the inquiring mind. Taking the Old Testament, for instance, as preparatory to the New: its history, prophecies, ceremonies, and types; viewing the people Israel not only in their literal bearing, but also as illustrating the spiritual Israel in all ages; the promised land, reminding of the heavenly Canaan; the kings and priests of old, as Joshua, and David, and Solomon, Aaron, and Moses,—all pointing to our High Priest and Mediator, the Captain of our Salvation; the blood of bulls and goats, to Him who was to be the great sacrifice! Oh how fully is the mind led by these things to “behold the Lamb of God!”

Then, in the New Testament, to review all the glorious fulfilment of these things, all the precious words of Jesus, our Redeemer, and the Spirit’s teachings in the apostolic writings, and with honest scrutiny conducting the edifying self-application; Oh how conducive to progress in the divine life!

Are we reading of penitence for guilt, of faith in Christ, of the Spirit’s work in the heart, of walking in holiness?