

# **THE TRUE METHOD OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649503544

The True Method of Searching the Scriptures by Tolbert Fanning

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**TOLBERT FANNING**

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TRUE METHOD  
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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES,

BY

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CINCINNATI:  
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY,  
1854.

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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by  
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Ohio.

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TRUE METHOD  
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SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS

IN the brief race of life, we all start from the same point. We enter the world unconscious of our origin, of our very existence, and of the objects which surround us; and profoundly ignorant of the dark and dreary future, which spreads out before us. We differ through life in our information, in the part we play in life's drama; and we shall finally differ in the world to come; yet all our differences, to a greater or less extent, depend upon our own exertions. The wisest and best of men become so, by continual labor; while the corrupt and degraded, reap only the reward of their own wicked lives. In our jail and penitentiary reports, we see clearly that, crime most abounds in

the hands of ignorance; and while we must admit that, the drunken, profane, and vile of all climes, from their mistakes in the objects of life, bring upon themselves their deepest misery, we are led to ask ourselves the profound question, Why do mortals of earth, sin against God, their Creator and kind Preserver? Solomon has answered the question: "The way of the wicked," said he, "is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble." "Darkness," indeed, "has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." "The blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch together."

No one can walk in the light, who has it not; and if correct moral conduct, spiritual progress, and eternal life, at the end of our earthly journey, depend in the least, upon the quality and amount of our moral light, the study of life should be, to gain true knowledge. It is a singular truth that, men often become quite wise in the affairs of this world, who, nevertheless, remain children in the things that pertain to God; and it is still more strange that, there are large funds of false wisdom, which close the



mind and heart to the true fountain, which is able to enlighten every man that comes into the world. The question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" is not more appropriate than to ask, "What shall it profit us, though we acquire all the knowledge *the world* can furnish, and yet fail to gain 'The true light' which comes from above, and which alone can give assurance of 'That rest which remains for the people of God.'"

## PART FIRST.

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### THE TRUE ORIGIN OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND OUR DUTIES TO HIM.

INASMUCH as men, for nearly six thousand years, have become virtuous and happy, in the exact ratio of their knowledge of their Creator, and his will concerning them, it is a question of very deep interest to ascertain the proper mode of acquiring this inestimable information. There are three ways, in which it is supposed this knowledge is gained; yet, there can be but one correct source of Divine wisdom. These demand a brief, yet careful examination, at our hands.

FIRST. *It is supposed that Nature affords full information concerning our Father who is in heaven.*

The word Nature is employed; first, to denote the outward world—the heavens with their starry hosts, and the earth, with her ten thousand tongues; and, secondly, it is

used to express the supposed world of spontaneous light within—that which is imagined to be natural to the soul.

Wise men, in the different ages of the world, and even christian philosophers, have maintained that, the study of external nature not only affords correct knowledge with regard to the invisible God, but also, furnishes all needful information relative to our duties to our Creator, and to each other. It would be proper to state, in reply, that nature is not a bridge from the visible to the invisible world. The dull matter of the heavens and the earth, with their whole machinery, is insufficient to *suggest* either the existence or perfections of that God who is Spirit. The leap from the visible to the invisible, is not only too great for the philosophy of man, but it is also far above his loftiest imagination. A few plain reasons will justify these conclusions.

When man was first created, his Father and his God, though invisible to us, spoke to him face to face; and it is unreasonable to suppose, that his posterity could entirely lose such information. We, moreover, have