



LESSON NINE

The Antidote of the Inoculation

Scripture Reading:

2 TIMOTHY 3

- 3:1 But know this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
- 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3:3 Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, not lovers of good,
- 3:4 Traitors, reckless, blinded with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
- 3:5 Having an outward form of godliness, though denying its power; from these also turn away.
- 3:6 For of these are those who creep into houses and take captive silly women heaped with sins, who are led by various desires
- 3:7 *And* are always learning yet never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- 3:8 And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also oppose the truth; men corrupted in mind, disapproved concerning the faith.
- 3:9 But they will not advance farther, for their folly will be completely manifest to all, as also the *folly* of those became.
- 3:10 But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, endurance,
- 3:11 Persecutions, sufferings, such as befell me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra. Such persecutions I bore, and out of them all the Lord delivered me.
- 3:12 And indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
- 3:13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- 3:14 But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned *them*
- 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

QUESTIONS:

SECTION 1:

1. Why does chapter 3 begin with the word 'but'?
2. What does 'difficult times' in 2 Timothy 3:1 mean? What is Paul trying to say here?
3. Who are the men in verses 2-5 referring to?

SECTION 2:

1. What does it mean to be a 'lover' of something? How is this related to the church?
2. What is the target of enemy's attack in the decline among the churches? Why is this the case?
3. What kind of treatment should we expect from today's Christianity?

SECTION 3:

1. Why do we need an understanding of the Word of God?
2. What are the three things needed to confront the death corruption and confusion in the decline of the Church?
3. In what way do we need to know the Bible?

SECTION 4:

1. How can the instructions in righteousness given according to the Bible actually work?
2. How do we inhale the divine breath of the Scripture to receive the life supply?
3. Name some ways to inhale the Divine breath.

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THE WORSENING OF THE DECLINE

The subject of 2 Timothy is inoculation against the decline of the church. After a word of introduction (1:1-2), Paul speaks of the divine provisions for the inoculation: a pure conscience, unfeigned faith, the divine gift, a strong spirit, eternal grace, incorruptible life, the healthy word, and the indwelling Spirit (1:3-14). Then he goes on to point out that the basic factor of the decline is the forsaking of the apostle and his ministry (1:15-18). In 2:1-15 Paul speaks of the inoculator, indicating that he must be a teacher, soldier, contender, husbandman, and workman. In the second half of chapter two he tells us of the spread of the decline, a spreading likened to that of gangrene (2:16-26). In chapter three Paul first speaks of the worsening of the decline, showing that it will become grievous times of deceiving (3:1-13), and then speaks of the antidote of the inoculation—the divine word (3:14-17). In chapter four there are three sections: the incentive to the inoculator—the coming reward (4:1-8); the issue of the decline—loving the present age and doing many evil things (4:9-18); and the conclusion (4:19-22). If we consider the outline of 2 Timothy, we shall see that it is not merely a pastoral book, a book for so-called pastors. On the contrary, it is a book written for inoculators, those who would inoculate others against the decline of the church.

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I. THE DIFFICULT TIMES

A. Coming in the Last Days

Chapter three opens with the words, “But know this, that in the last days difficult times shall come.” Once again Paul uses the word “but” to point out a contrast. The contrast here is with the hope just expressed at the end of the preceding chapter. Toward the end of chapter two Paul declared that “the firm foundation of God stands” (v. 19), and that we should “flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (v. 22). Furthermore, if in meekness we correct those who oppose, “God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth, and they may return to soberness out of the snare of the Devil” (vv. 25-26). Paul realized that even though the decline would spread, the firm foundation of God still stands unshakable, bearing a seal which says, “The Lord

knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.” At least God would have a remnant of those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Furthermore, such ones may even dispense the inoculation against the church’s decline. Yes, the decline is spreading, but we have a firm standing, we can enjoy the riches of the Lord, and we can do the work of inoculation, even convincing those who oppose to come back to the full knowledge of the truth. This is to bring back those who have been caught by the Devil, and snared by him, to God’s will. All this indicates that Paul was not discouraged. Even though the decline is spreading, we can do something positively to inoculate others against it.

Then in contrast to all this Paul says in 3:1, “But know this, that in the last days difficult times shall come.” Paul had the foresight and the insight to realize that difficult times would come in the last days. The expression “the last days” denotes the closing period of the present age (2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 18). It began from the end of the so-called apostolic age, in the latter part of the first century, and will last until Christ’s second appearing. The long duration of this period was not revealed to the apostles (Matt. 24:36); they expected the Lord to return in their generation.

Many Christians identify “the last days” in 3:1 with the “later times” in 1 Timothy 4:1. This is a mistake. In the Bible there is a dividing line between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The ancient Jews regarded the times of the Old Testament as the early times or early days. With the coming of Christ the period of the Mosaic law was over. Christ’s coming began a new period, regarded as the last days, which will continue until Christ’s second coming. Concerning Christ’s second coming, there is a secret period of time, which was not known by the apostles. They were eager to know the time of the Lord’s second coming. But in Mark 13:32 the Lord Jesus said, “But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” Later, after the Lord’s resurrection, the disciples asked Him, “Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). To this the Lord replied, “It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority” (v. 7). It is not easy to explain how the Lord could

say that only the Father, not the Son, knows the time of the end. Perhaps in refusing to answer the question about the time of His coming, the Lord Jesus was maintaining the proper position under the headship of the Father. Therefore, He told them that this was something which “the Father hath set within his own authority.”

The early disciples thought that the Lord Jesus would come back in their generation. This was Paul’s concept when he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians. This shows that the length of the last days was a secret unknown by the apostles. We simply do not know the duration of time the Father has set in His administration between the Lord’s ascension and His second coming.

In 3:1 Paul says that in the last days “difficult times shall come.” The Greek for “difficult times” also means hard times, grievous times, perilous times. This means that these times will be extremely difficult for Christians. In verse 12 Paul says, “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” For those who pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace and who call on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart, this time will indeed be difficult, grievous, perilous. Here Paul seems to be saying, “Timothy, I am encouraged by the fact that the firm foundation of God stands and that, with others, you can pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace and call on the Lord out of a pure heart. You can stand together and dispense the inoculation against the decline of the church. Some may even be recovered to the full knowledge of the truth and to the will of God. Nevertheless, I want you to know that the time which is coming will be very difficult for you. This time will be grievous, perilous, for all those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart and who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus.”

B. What Men Shall Be

In verse 2 Paul goes on to say, “For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.” The prophetic picture presented in verses 2 through 5 portrays not the evil condition of non-Christian society, but the corrupted situation of the “great house” mentioned in 2:20, degraded Christianity. This is proved by the phrase, “having a form of godliness” (v. 5). Unbelievers do not have even the form of godliness. Those who have such a

form are those who are called Christians. Thus, the men in verse 2 are Christians.

The first thing Paul says about these men is that they will be “lovers of self.” Many Christians today are self-lovers. Not only those who indulge in worldly entertainments are selfish; even those who attend the chapels and cathedrals may be selfish.

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In the three Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus seven kinds of lovers are mentioned: lovers of self, lovers of money (2 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 6:10), lovers of pleasure, lovers of God (2 Tim 3:4), lovers of good (Titus 1:8), lovers of husbands, and lovers of children (Titus 2:4). There are also two kinds of nonlovers: nonlovers of good and nonlovers of God (2 Tim. 3:3-4). Of whatever one is a lover, that is what his whole heart, even his entire being, is set on, occupied, and possessed by. This is crucial! Whether there could be a day of glory in the church’s victory or grievous days of the church’s decline depends altogether upon what we set our heart upon, what it is we love. History tells us that the root of the church’s decline was the loss of her first love toward the Lord (Rev. 2:4). To maintain the victorious standard of the church, we must be lovers of God and lovers of the good which pertains to God’s economy.

In verse 2 Paul speaks of those who are boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, and unholy. The Greek word for arrogant also means haughty, and the word rendered revilers is literally blasphemers, as in 1 Timothy 1:13. Here, however, it does not refer to blasphemers of God, but to revilers or railers, those who speak evilly and injuriously of men. How much we have been reviled by those who call themselves Christians!

It is significant that in verse 2 Paul puts together unthankfulness with disobedience to parents. This may indicate that here unthankful mainly refers to being unthankful to one’s parents. We should be thankful to those who have raised us both physically and spiritually, thankful both to our natural parents and to our spiritual parents.

In the 1940s Brother Nee suffered intense opposition and was forced to be out of function for six years. Some of those who were dissenting with him still felt positive toward me because they had

received help from me. One day one of them asked me, “Do you believe that Brother Nee has never been wrong?” I answered, “Whether or not Brother Nee has ever been wrong is not my business. I only know that I am indebted to him just as a child to his parents. If it were not for this servant of the Lord, I could not have the life I now have as a Christian. I have learned the lesson of Ham, the son of Noah, and I dare not say anything negative about him. In a real sense, he has been a spiritual father to me. He has raised me up in the Lord. Therefore, I do not dare say anything negative concerning him.” I can testify that throughout the years I have seen the blessing which has come from maintaining such an attitude toward my spiritual father. Both to our parents in the flesh and in the spirit we must learn to be thankful. It is a very serious matter to be ungrateful toward our parents. One aspect of today’s trend is unthankfulness. This trend, this current, has even swept into Christianity.

In verses 3 and 4 Paul continues, “Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, nonlovers of good, traitors, reckless, blinded with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” To be implacable is to be irreconcilable, to be a traitor is to be a betrayer, and to be reckless is to be headstrong. In the picture presented here there are three kinds of lovers—lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure—and two kinds of nonlovers—nonlovers of good and nonlovers of God.

Verse 5 says, “Having a form of godliness, but having denied its power; from these also turn away.” A form of godliness is a mere outward semblance without the essential reality. The power of godliness is the real and practical virtue of a living influence to express God.

In these verses we have a dreadful picture of today’s degraded Christianity. By the Lord’s mercy and grace, we in His recovery must reject the situation portrayed here and be the very opposite of it.

Verses 6 and 7 speak of those who are “always learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.” This word has been fulfilled among many Christians today. They hear sermon after sermon and study the Bible, but they do not know the reality of the contents of God’s New Testament economy. They do not know Christ

as the embodiment of the Triune God or the church as the mystery of Christ.

Verse 8 says, “And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind, disapproved concerning the faith.” According to Jewish tradition, Jannes and Jambres were the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses, as mentioned in Exodus 7:11 and 22.

In the decline among the churches, truth is the target of the enemy’s attack. Hence, truth is also the remedy and rescue from the diseased and ruined situation. In verse 8 disapproved means reprobate, and the faith denotes the contents of our belief.

In verse 9 Paul goes on to say, “They shall not advance farther, for their folly shall be completely manifest to all, as also the folly of those became.” The word folly refers to the lack of intelligence and the senselessness of their doing. The “folly of those” refers to the folly of Jannes and Jambres, who were defeated and brought to nothing (Exo. 8:18; 9:11).

II. THE INOCULATOR STANDING AGAINST THE TIDE OF THE DECLINE

In verse 10 Paul reminds Timothy, “But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, endurance.” Conduct refers to manner of life, and the Greek word for purpose is used in Paul’s Epistles in relation to the purpose of God.

In verse 11 Paul speaks of the persecution and sufferings which he endured in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. Lystra was the city where Timothy lived (Acts 16:1-2), near Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia.

Verse 12 says, “And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” The Greek word rendered desire can also mean determine. To live godly is to live a life of godliness. All those who desire, determine, to live a life of godliness in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. For this reason we should not expect good treatment from today’s Christianity. Instead, we should expect persecution for living a godly life in an ungodly situation. As long as we stand for the Lord’s recovery, we shall be condemned, opposed, and attacked. Rumors will be spread concerning us, and our names will be smeared and defiled. Such

persecution comes not from the worldly people, but from so-called Christians. In John 16:2 the Lord Jesus said that the time is coming when those who kill the disciples will think they are serving God. Out of their zeal for God, they will kill the followers of the Lord, simply because these do not follow the traditional way.

III. THE WORSENING OF THE DECLINE

In verse 13 Paul concludes, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” The word impostors means juggling impostors. This verse indicates that the decline of the church will become worse. Evil men and impostors, those who deceive others by their skill in juggling, will become worse and worse. Being deceived themselves, they will also deceive others.

We thank the Lord that, in His mercy, He has brought us into the recovery where we can hear honest and healthy words.

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THE ANTIDOTE OF THE INOCULATION

We have seen that the subject of 2 Timothy is the inoculation against the decline of the church. In this message we shall consider the antidote of the inoculation, which is the divine Word. In 2:16-26 we have the spread of the decline and in 3:1-13, the worsening of the decline. We praise the Lord that in 3:14-17 we have a wonderful, heavenly, divine, spiritual, and rich antidote. As we shall see, this antidote is the divine word of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the God-breathed Scripture which is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness and which completes the man of God and fully equips him for every good work.

I. THE DIVINE WORD

A. Of the New Testament

Second Timothy 3:14 says, “But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned.” The things which Timothy learned of the apostle and was assured of were the vital portion of the content of the New Testament, which completed the divine revelation (Col. 1:25). Hence,

he had the practical understanding of a great part of the New Testament. These were the things he had learned from Paul and which he had been assured of by him.

The word ministered by Paul was the completing word of God’s revelation, the main part of the New Testament. Verse 14 indicates that from Paul Timothy received the proper knowledge of the New Testament and became assured of it, even though at that time the New Testament was not complete as a written volume. Timothy was granted the central revelation of the New Testament.

B. Of the Old Testament

In verse 15 Paul goes on to say, “And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” In addition to the knowledge of the New Testament, Timothy also had, from his childhood, a good foundation in the knowledge of the Old Testament. He was one who was fully perfected and equipped to minister the word of God, not only in caring for a local church, but also in confronting the increasing decline of the church.

Together verses 14 and 15 refer to both the Old Testament and the New Testament. By knowing the sacred writings from childhood, Timothy was familiar with the Old Testament, and from Paul he gained a proper knowledge of the central part of the New Testament. Therefore, Timothy had a proper understanding of the Bible as a whole. Today all the saints...especially the young people, need the understanding of the Word of God, an understanding of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

II. THE SCRIPTURE

A. All God-breathed

Verse 16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The Greek words rendered, “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable,” may also be translated “Every Scripture God-breathed is also profitable.”

To confront the death, corruption, and confusion in the church’s decline, the eternal life upon which

chapter one is based (vv. 1, 10), the divine truth emphasized in chapter two (vv. 15, 18, 25), and the holy Scripture highly regarded in chapter three (vv. 14-17) are all needed. The eternal life not only swallows up death, but also renders the life supply; the divine truth replaces the vanity of corruption with the reality of all the divine riches; and the holy Scripture not only dispels confusion, but also furnishes divine light and revelation. Hence, in this book the apostle stresses these three things.

The expression “God-breathed” indicates that the Scripture, the Word of God, is the breath of God. God’s speaking is God’s breathing. Hence, His word is spirit (John 6:63), *pneuma*, or breath. Thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit. The Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches. We must “strike” the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to kindle the divine fire.

As the embodiment of God the Spirit, the Scripture is also the embodiment of Christ. Christ is God’s living Word (Rev. 19:13), and the Scripture is God’s written word (Matt. 4:4).

B. Profitable

According to verse 16, all Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Reproof here means conviction or confutation. Correction denotes setting right what is wrong, turning someone to the right way, or restoring a person to an upright state. Instruction refers to discipline or chastisement in righteousness. This means to discipline or chastise in the element and condition of righteousness.

C. To Complete the Man of God

In verse 17 Paul says, “That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.” We have seen that a man of God is one who partakes of God’s life and nature (John 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:4) and thus becomes one with Him in His life and nature (1 Cor. 6:17) and thereby expresses Him. This corresponds to the mystery of godliness, which is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Through the God-breathed Scripture, the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work. Complete here means complete and

perfect in qualifications, and equipped denotes being fitted out, furnished, made ready.

We need to know the Bible not merely according to letters in black and white, but also according to the divine revelation and heavenly wisdom. Do not think that having an advanced degree qualifies anyone to understand a book such as Ephesians. If we study this Epistle only in letters, we shall not be able to understand it. For a proper understanding of this book, and for the Bible as a whole, we need a spirit of wisdom and revelation. This was the reason Paul prayed, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened” (Eph. 1:17-18).

We honor, respect, and treasure the holy Word under the shining of the heavenly light which comes by a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Because we depend on God’s enlightenment, His Word is opened to us.

Many Christians misuse 3:16 and 17. They point out that the holy Scripture is for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness and that it enables the man of God to be equipped, completed, and perfected. Although all this is true, it neglects the element of life in the Word. Those who regard the Bible as a book of teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction often ignore the life essence of the Word. As human beings we have a physical body outwardly, but inwardly we have a spirit and a soul. Our person is composed not mainly of the outward part, the body, but of the inward parts, the spirit and the soul. The principle is the same with the Bible. The Bible has not only a “body” of letters in black and white; it also has a spirit, because it is God-breathed. If in reading the Bible we exercise only our mind to study it, we shall not receive the life supply.

Most Christians neglect the spirit and take the Bible as a book of letters. The Lord Jesus once said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63). Furthermore, we have pointed out that every word of the Bible is part of God’s breath. Thus, we should not only study the Word, but also breathe in the divine breath embodied in the Word. If we do not breathe the divine breath by exercising our spirit, we shall not receive life from our study of the Bible. But when we breathe in

God's breath, we are enlivened by a divine, heavenly, and spiritual element.

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I wish to emphasize the fact that to study the Bible in order to follow its instructions is not sufficient. Often during a wedding ceremony a minister will instruct the bride and groom according to Paul's word in Ephesians 5. The minister will then remind the wife to submit to the husband and the husband to love his wife. Although they may promise to fulfill these requirements, they will not be able to do so unless they receive the divine breath in the Word. The instructions in righteousness given according to the Bible do not work if we do not receive the breath of God, for then, in practice, we shall make these instructions the same as the ethical teachings of Confucius.

We thank the Lord for showing us that in reading the Word we need to exercise our eyes, our mind, and our spirit. We may say that with the eyes we contact the body of the Word, that with our mind we contact the soul of the Word, and through the exercise of our spirit to pray the Word, we contact the spirit of the Word. Then we not only understand the meaning of a certain portion of Scripture; we also inhale the divine breath to receive the life supply.

Many of us can testify that a certain verse of the Bible may be very precious to us as we read it. However, disciples of Confucius may also regard certain statements made by him as precious. But with the teachings of Confucius there is no divine breath. God's Word contains His breath. Within the letters of the Bible there is the Spirit who gives life. This is the reason that in reading the Word we must exercise our spirit in addition to our mind. Then the verses we read will be not only precious to us, but they will nourish, refresh, and water us.

Actually, the function of the Word in teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction is all related to transformation. The Bible corrects us not primarily outwardly, but inwardly in the way of transformation. This means that the word of Scripture works within us in a metabolic way. Just as the food we eat and digest nourishes us from within, metabolically changing and transforming us, so the Word of God transforms us by inwardly teaching, reproof, correcting, and instructing us.

If we would be nourished by the Word, we should not only pray it, but also psalm it and sing it. In Colossians 3:16 Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God." By praying, psalming, and singing the Word we shall fan our spirit into flame. Furthermore, when we pray, psalm, and sing the Word, we inhale the divine breath and receive more of the element of God. In this way God dispenses Himself into us and infuses us with His element.

Allow me to testify concerning the light we have received on John 16:8-11. One day in my reading of these verses I saw that sin, righteousness, and judgment are related to the three persons of Adam, Christ, and Satan. Sometime later I was asked to give the message for a gospel meeting... I spoke on these verses and told the people, "As human beings, you were born in Adam. In Adam you have sinned and you have been condemned. But there is another person—Christ—and there is a way for you to get out of Adam and into Christ that you may be justified by God. If you believe in Christ, you will be transferred into Him. But if you do not believe into Christ, you will remain in Adam, the first person, and eventually your destiny will be that of Satan, the third person. Judgment has been prepared for Satan. Do you intend to help Satan suffer judgment for eternity? Will you remain in Adam with sin and eventually share the judgment with Satan, or will you believe in Christ and be transferred into Him in order to receive the gift of righteousness?" That message was very good, full of light. After delivering that message, I was fully nourished. Brother Nee spoke to me sometime later concerning that message and said, "... hardly anyone has seen that in John 16:8-11 sin is related to Adam, righteousness to Christ, and judgment to Satan. I encourage you to continue to teach the Bible in this way." I could never forget Brother Nee's word to me. Today I am still being encouraged, strengthened, and confirmed by that word.

We thank the Lord that over the years the light has been shining upon us, even pouring out upon us. Apart from the Lord's enlightening, we may read 2 Timothy a dozen times without seeing anything related to the inoculation. To see this we need a light. Under the light we can realize that the divine

word, the Scripture, is the antidote of the inoculation.

We should not read the Bible in the way the religionists did at the time of the Lord Jesus and Paul. They did not realize that the title of God—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—implied resurrection. Probably Gamaliel instructed Paul according to Genesis 12 and 15, but it was not until Paul was enlightened of the Lord and received revelation that he realized that Abraham's wife and his concubine typified two covenants. This shows that it is one thing to be a Bible scholar; it is quite another thing to have the light of God's revelation.

We should not merely study the Word in letter. We need to pray that the Lord would give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation. If we do not have such a spirit but read only the black and white letters of the Bible, we shall not experience life, light, or spirit. There is a great difference between the way the Bible is used among most Christians today and the way it is used among us in the Lord's recovery. The majority of believers use the Word in the way of letters, but we use it in the way of life, light, and spirit. This is the reason we constantly humble ourselves before the Lord, open to Him, and look to Him for light, vision, wisdom, and revelation. May we all learn to come to the Word of God in this way.