

THE USE OF THE WORD

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Have you ever wondered why the Lord has given us His Word? It is because by ourselves we can learn all we need to know about the natural world and how to live in it. But by ourselves we can't know anything about the spiritual world where our spirits, that is, our real selves, will live forever after we leave this world.

The Lord wants all of us to choose what kind of life will make us the happiest. He wants us to be as happy as we can be when living forever in the spiritual world, and He knows we can only be really happy when we live the way we want, not the way we are forced to. A person who loves evil couldn't be happy in heaven, and someone who loves good could not be happy among evil spirits. For this reason, the Lord lets us choose what kind of life we really want to live, whether good or evil.

It is for this reason that He has given us His Word, in which He tells us what kind of things we need to learn to love to become angels of heaven. Of course, we can also choose to turn away from the Word and become evil spirits.

How should we use the Lord's Word? There are three possible ways.

One is just to have copies of the Word on our book shelves—only for show and not to read.

Another way is to read the Word, but pick out only those teachings that agree with what we already think and do. For example, there is a teaching which says the Lord forgives us if we do evil. This teaching could be used to say it is all right to do evil—forgetting those teachings that plainly say the Lord forgives us if we are sorry and stop doing evil. Or we could read the Golden Rule, which says to do to others what we would like them to do to us, and suppose it means that it is all right for us to hurt those who hurt us. But this would be forgetting that the Golden Rule actually says something quite different—that we are to treat others as we would like them to treat us.

The third way we can use the Word is to try hard to learn and understand the truths the Lord teaches in it, and to try the best we can to live by them. Then we will know how the Lord wants us to think and will and live, so that we can become angels of heaven and be as happy as He wants us to be.

This is the hardest way to use the Word, but it is also the best way. And the Lord tells us that if we really try to do His will, after a while it will become easier—something we really want to do.