

CONTINUING THE “GREEN LETTERS”

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CHAPTERS 64-65, pgs. 287-294

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GROWTH THROUGH LITERATURE AND LEADERSHIP

LITERATURE PRESERVES THE THOUGHT OF THE WRITER FOR YEARS TO COME

- 1. It preserves the thought of the writer who was writing in his time, his culture and his background. Therefore, seek to be as familiar as possible with this setting*
- 2. The writer may have been addressing a particular question or realm of knowledge. Try to understand his setting and be most careful not to put your current thought on his writing as if he was speaking to you about that current situation*
- 3. The writer was addressing a certain targeted audience. Try to determine who that was and guard yourself against making yourself and your situation that targeted group. For instance, the Bible was written TO the Jewish people, especially during a special time for them. But it is also written FOR you as a reader. Keep them in their proper category.*
- 4. Because it is written down, you may reference it again and again. It can be noted, underlined, highlighted or any other means to assist your memory for things that were important from what you read. Make notes if it will help you. Always check it with Scripture.*

LITERATURE IS WRITTEN IN A PARTICULAR FOREMAT; READ IT IN THAT FOREMAT, FOLLOWING THE GENERAL RULES FOR THAT TYPE OF LITERATURE

- 1. Let fiction, be fiction; history, be history; poetry,...*
- 2. If you learned something from it, check it with Scripture, not just your theological system or your church's viewpoint*

IF A DICTIONARY OR OTHER REFERENCE MATERIAL IS NEEDED, USE IT. DO NOT LET THAT PREVENT YOU FROM READING.

THE BIBLE IS THE SUPERIOR READING MATERIAL TO ALL OTHER LITERATURE IN THE WORLD. APPLY THE ABOVE RULES AND IMMERSIVE YOURSELF IN ITS STUDY.

READ OTHER BOOKS AS SUPPLEMENTS OR LIGHT ON THE BIBLICAL CONTENT YOU HAVE READ.

- 1. Our author suggested books that best agreed with the position he has taken on the believer's identification with Christ. These books are consistent with his thoughts on the matter so he gives them a thumbs up.*
- 2. But you will notice that he does not suggest that the authors who penned a book he approved are to be recommended on other subjects about which he disagrees. That does not make those authors wrong on that subject it merely means he does not agree with some position they have taken on a subject. Be cautious of being too dogmatic about the exactness of subject matter. What is being written is interpretation of passages to allow them to agree with a logical, though not always Scriptural, system of thought to which the critic subscribes.*

READ WITH DISCERNMENT, PRAYER AND WITH SCRIPTURAL CROSS-REFERENCING.

- 1. This is why the literature with which you should be most familiar is the Word of God.*
- 2. This is why a wholesome, humble, faith-filled relationship with God must be cultivated every moment of the day. Our adversary roams about looking for those he may devour and deceive.*
- 3. This is why a living and intense prayer life must be maintained.*
- 4. Remember it is possible to agree with some of what an author says if it agrees with Scripture, Christ and the character of God and, at the same time, to reject what is questionably scriptural. Acceptance of an idea that is agreeable with Scripture is not an endorsement of the author. Authors can be Scripturally correct on some concepts and not so much so on others. "Take what you need and leave the rest."*

5. *Do not feel the need to defend an author or a system of thought; you do NOT have to do that. Many have put themselves in an untenable position because they defended something that was not truly their own. If a concept of an author has been pleasing to your understanding of the Scripture at this time, then accept it long enough to test it; only defend it when you have once tested it and found it to be biblically acceptable.*
6. *Do not go it alone. Read with a group or a partner. Share what you read with your group or partner. Choose someone biblically solid to sort of “father” you along in your walk with Christ.*
7. *After you have read it and found it biblically accurate, apply it.*

READ THE AUTHOR’S SUGGESTED BOOKS! THEY ARE GOOD MATERIAL. FOLLOW THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS

NOTE: Because this book was written a few years ago, some of the suggested books may no longer be in print. Some books may have been written since that time. The author is addressing only those books that address the identification movement, especially as expressed in the Keswick. There are many wonderful books written by Puritans that address Christian living. The Church Fathers address Christian living as well. There are some excellent books written on discipline in the Christian life, especially asceticism. He did not mean to suggest that he had read all of these books and waded through them.

APPLY THESE SAME BASIC RULES TO ALL THE TEACHERS WHOM YOU ARE GIVING YOUR EAR; BUT USE DISCERNMENT!

1. *Additionally, do not expect your pastor to know what another teacher has said or expect him to weigh in on the accuracy of that teacher if he has not heard the same message you did. Remember, each time you are listening to a teacher you have a certain mindset that might not be recaptured by you again; your pastor or friends may not have that mindset at all and therefore do not get from that teacher what you did.*

2. *Be familiar with the background theological system to which the teacher is a member or adherent. That will affect the content of his teaching. If you can learn this, you will be able to sort through his teaching and take the biblical material and leave that system material.*

NOTE: We are made in the image of God and God is not the author of confusion. Consequently, when we are reconnected to God through the second birth, we have a longing to bring order out of chaos. The Bible is not a dictionary or systematically organized book, but a collection of the inspired writings of many Jewish writers to a Jewish people with one central theme disguised in it by stories, events, prophecies, poems and other writings that require some effort to understand. Additionally, because it is a spiritual book, it also requires the Spirit of the author to illumine the revelation He gave to those writers. We try to take our understanding of what has been written and organize it into logical sequences to clear up the apparent confusion. Unfortunately, our systems are more logical than they are biblical. We try to fill in the gaps of the revelation with what seems logical to us in order to explain to our human reasoning how God works and what God means. If we had done this well, there would be common agreement among all who believe. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Be cautious, therefore, in defending systems of thought.

3. *Our author does a good job of revealing some of the obstacles to learning these identification truths. Not all pastor/teachers know these truths themselves and therefore may never speak of them. These truths are not best taught in a formal teaching setting. Those who are being taught are not always prepared to receive these truths. It takes time and humility with the illumination of the Holy Spirit to settle these truths into practice. We must be patient and faithful to learn them and teach them.*