

# **“The Scriptures... Testify of Me”**

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The Witness of Structure  
and its relation to the  
“Place” and “Function”  
of the Scriptures

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by  
Andrew H. Morton

# **“They.....Testify of Me”**

or  
The “Place” of Scripture: the “Function” of Scripture  
and  
The Relation to these of “The Principle of Structure  
in Scripture”

by

**Andrew H. Morton**

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“Lord, at Thy Word, opens yon door inviting  
Teacher and taught to feast this hour with Thee;  
Opens a Book where God in human writing  
Thinks His deep thoughts and dead tongues live for me.

Too dread the task, too great the duty calling,  
Too heavy far, the weight is laid on me!  
Oh, if mine own thought should on Thy words falling  
Mar the great message, and men not hear THEE!

Give me Thy Voice to speak, Thine ear to listen,  
Give me Thy mind to grasp the Mystery;  
So shall my heart throb and my glad eyes glisten,  
Rapt with the wonders Thou dost show to me.”

Dr. J. H. Moulton.

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“Oh, could I tell, ye surely could believe it!  
Oh, could I only say what I have seen!  
How should I tell? or how should we receive it?  
How, till He bringeth you where I have been?”

F. W. H. Myers.

## **“The Scriptures.....They.....Testify of Me”**

This little booklet is a sequel to a former booklet entitled *The Principle of Structure in Scripture*, in which an attempt was made to set forth the fact of the existence of such a Principle pervading the whole of the Scriptures. There it was demonstrated that such principle consists of the parallelism and balance by repetition, of words, phrases and themes, in the different books of Scripture, and in the sections and passages making up those books; there was also indicated, very briefly, some of the advantages derived from recognition of that fact. This booklet, though a sequel, yet forms a self-contained unit, so that the reader who has not seen the former booklet is not prejudiced in following the line of thought here developed, which is concentrated upon (a) the vital fact that the Scriptures testify of the Lord Jesus Christ and are intended to introduce every reader of them to a personal and living contact, and then an ever-growing and deepening fellowship, with Him; and (b) an attempt to show the reader of this booklet how recognition of the fact of “Structure” in Scripture, and then the use of it, may greatly help him or her.

One is conscious that some students of the Word of God have no use for “structure”: one can only say, humbly and in the spirit of Christ, that one’s experiences makes one feel that they are missing much. Others say or think that the study of it necessitates a knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were written Hebrew or Greek, as the case may be. Knowledge of these languages is manifestly a help but, speaking generally, so good a translation is the Authorised Version that in the English a great deal of the parallelism and structure underlying the original Scriptures is open to, and can be seen by the attentive reader willing, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to give the time to search and see.

In opening this study together, then, we first set out in the English wording of the Authorised Version, in the form of their underlying structures, two little passages in Scripture, each of no more that two verses.

### **2 Timothy 3: 16-17. The “Profitableness” of the Scriptures.**

- A a. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God
  - b. And is profitable
- B for doctrine
- C for reproof
- C for correction
- B for instruction in righteousness
- A a. That the man of God may be perfect
  - b. throughly furnished unto all good works.

### John 5: 30-40. The “Witness” of the Scriptures.

- A a. Ye search the Scriptures for
- b. IN THEM
- c. Ye think ye have eternal life
- B And they are they which testify of Me
- A a. And ye will not come
- b. TO ME
- c. That ye might have life.

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The setting out of the above passages in the form of their underlying structures shows something of the balance that lies behind them, and at the same time illustrates the principle which lies behind all Scripture. Thus, looking at the above structure of **2 Timothy 3: 16-17**, it stands out clearly that in that passage, the Divinely-inspired Scriptures are balanced by the Divinely-fitted man of God; that the profitableness of Scripture is there seen to lie in the fact that the man of God is completely equipped unto all good works, while at the heart of the structure lies the profitableness of Scripture in relation to the teaching of what is good, balanced by instruction in righteousness, and in the reproof which Scripture brings to bear in relation to that which is wrong in practice, and its correction as to that which is astray as to doctrine.

Similarly in **John 5: 39-40**, the contrasts are obvious : on the one hand, the searching of the Scriptures because they mistakenly thought that it was “in them” that they had eternal life, and on the other hand, their unwillingness to come “to Me” (the Lord Jesus) and so, in very deed, have life, while at the heart of the structure lies the unqualified statement of the Lord that the Scriptures are they which testify of HIM.

One can readily understand how anyone picking up this booklet and looking at the structures set out above might well say, “*What a strange way of setting out those passages; I do not recall ever having seen anything like that before. At least I can glimpse something of the way in which those passages have been fashioned with a balance behind them, and you say that that same principle applies to all Scripture: but assuming that is admitted, what is the good of it?*” Now that is a very pertinent question, a well worthwhile query, and it is the object of this booklet to give an answer to it, and for that purpose we take three headings and consider them one by one, viz. :

1) The “**PLACE**” of Scripture : why the Scriptures have been given and our approach to them;

(2) the “**FUNCTION**” of the Scriptures, and the reason for the adoption by the Holy Spirit in the composition of them of the method of structural balance; and

(3) a portion of the Scriptures by way of illustration of the help which recognition of the Principle of Structure in Scripture affords in emphasizing the points to which, in any passage, the Holy Spirit is directing the mind and heart of the reader who will come to the patient study of the Scriptures in dependence upon His leading.

### **(1) The PLACE of Scripture and our approach it.**

We turn back to the first of the two passages cited above and seek something of the lessons contained in it. We note first that it is preceded by the sentence “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned (them) and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The closing words are vital. Not the Scriptures, glorious and precious as the truths in them be; not the Scriptures can bring salvation, but the PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is another way of stating what is said in the second text quoted above, The Scriptures bear witness concerning Me, come to Me and have life.

But then there follows our first passage beginning with “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.” The word “given by inspiration of God” translates a single Greek word, which literally means “God-breathed.” Let us note carefully what is said to “God-breathed,” “given by inspiration of God.” Is it the men who wrote the Scriptures? No! Though doubtless they were prepared, fitted, guided and overshadowed, though not to such an extent as to shut out personality and individual characteristics. Was it the substance of the revelation, which God desired to impart, so that the Scriptures might be properly said to be God’s thoughts in the words of men, words chosen by men? No! That does not satisfy the words of our passage.

What, then, was it that was “God-breathed”? It was “All Scripture” or as the Greek words may be rendered “every Scripture,” all that had been written and was embodied in what was designated “the Scriptures.” So that we can, speaking of the originals, say that they contained God’s thoughts, God’s purposes, God’s longings and desires, set out in His own way and in His own words; that “the Scriptures” as a whole, and the Words of which they are comprised, are God’s, and this as the result of the Holy Spirit’s working.

Peter, in his second Epistle (ch. 1:21) puts it in this way: “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The words “they were moved” are the translation of a word coming from the Greek verb meaning “to bear, to be borne along,” the verb used of the ship in the shipwreck in Acts 27:17, “and so were driven.”

So, again, in 1 Peter 1:10-11, the apostle, writing of the prophets, speaks of “their searching what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the Glory which should follow.”

In the light of these passages it is clear that the Scriptures are the work of the Spirit of God, using men as His instruments, and in the light of the two passages set out above, using structural balance as His method of emphasizing the truths He is imparting.

This is the “PLACE” we seek to give to “the Scriptures.” The study of the historical background of any parts of Scripture and enquiries as to the human writers and the philological peculiarities of their writings are not to be despised or disparaged: such studies have their value and their uses.

But, when all that has been admitted, what is of supreme value is not the ability to say who wrote it, or when, but the CONTENT of the writing which we actually have, and what lessons GOD has in it for us.

This, then, is the “how” the Scriptures have been built up by the Holy Spirit; the PLACE they occupy as the very Word and Words of God Himself, and our approach to them is along the lines of full and reverent recognition of these facts, and with the utter conviction that because “All Scripture” is thus “God-breathed,” it is profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped unto every good work.

**(2) The FUNCTION of Scripture and the reason for its “structural balance.”**

We turn to the second of the texts set out above - **John 5: 39-40**

Much might be said about these words of the Saviour, but two thoughts will suffice for our present purpose.

**(a) We learn here from our Lord’s Words that one (and that, perhaps, an all-embracing) function of the Scriptures is that they “testify” of HIM.**

Every page of Scripture in one way or another speaks of Him, the Lord Jesus, for God’s Purposes and Promises are all in Him, and God’s Purpose moves on, either with man’s co-operation or in spite of him, and both, concurrence and participation on the one hand, or opposition and obstruction on the other hand, are made to minister to its outworking. So, though one may be reading of Abel, Enoch or Abraham (children of faith) in the one hand, or of Cain, Lamech or Nimrod on the other, all may speak in their different ways of the Lord Jesus to the reader who is himself or herself in right relation to the Will of God. For instance, “the way of Cain” is a purported way to God, OTHER THAN BY CALVARY: it ousts CHRIST.

**(b) While the Scriptures testify of the Lord Jesus and bear witness to Him; while in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets and the psalms are the things written concerning Him (Luke 24:44) their “function” is not limited to telling ABOUT Him and God’s Purposes in Him, and to be brought to fruition through Him, but their function is to lead TO HIM, so that unwillingness to “come to Him” is set aside and there is, in very truth, that “coming” to Him which means the “having life” (in Him).**

The “reason” for the “structural balance” which marks Scripture is that it is the method which the Holy Spirit has adopted to underline, and impress upon the reader, what He is specially wishing to impart; the particular matters and points He desires emphasized. A theme is taken up, and later reverted to again; particular words are used and lower down in the record are repeated; or the thought brought forward is introduced again in different words, but carrying the same meaning. This is done intentionally, and is what constitutes the principle of Structure in Scripture. To get the “structure” of a Book or passage in Scripture is to have set before you (as it were, in a bird’s-eye view) the scope of that Book or passage - what it is all about. And to see the repetitions of theme and word in the structure is to have laid bare before you the steps in the record that mark the matters, which the Holy Spirit would have you, observe if you are to reach THE lessons He would have learnt. These repetitions of

theme or word are so many clues, pointers, left by the Spirit of God to direct the mind and, through the mind, the affections and the will of the reader to what the Holy Spirit would have him, or her, learn, and in particular to fasten the heart and the affections upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and to guide the will into obedience to him and all in dependence upon, and simple trust in, Him.

This, then, is the Function of Scripture, and the method adopted by the Holy Spirit in its composition.

**(3) A portion of Scripture by way of illustration of the help which recognition of the PRINCIPLE OF STRUCTURE IN SCRIPTURE affords in bringing out those points, to which, in any passage, the Holy Spirit is directing the mind and heart of the reader.**

Here, one is faced with the difficulty of selecting some passage, out of the whole Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments, which we may try and look at together as an illustration of what has been written above : let it be the well-known section in Genesis which tells of the offering by Abraham of his son, his “only” son, Isaac, upon the mount. The chapter itself is so full, needing Abraham, Isaac and the ram, as types, that we will use an epitomized form of its underlying structure and take the matters, which are repeated, as seen in the structure, and briefly comment on them. The reader is requested to bear in mind that we are endeavoring to set before him or her, in this passage, the FACT of structure, and the USE of it, in learning the lessons behind it, and not to be satisfied with a superficial glance at the structure given below, but to investigate for himself or herself by carefully comparing the structure with the full passage in the Word of God. No one is more keenly aware than the writer of this booklet that it is not what he may put before the reader, but what the reader, using that, himself or herself gets from the Word of God that will be of profit and of blessing.

Genesis chapter 22, opening with the words: “And it came to pass after these things,” is, of course, looking back to what has just gone before in the record. The last two verses in Chapter 21, reveal that Abraham was at Beersheba, and the particular section with which we are concerned, covering the offering of Isaac, ends with verse 19 of chapter 22, the succeeding verse opening a new section with similar words to those which open our section in verse 1, viz.: “And it came to pass after these things.”

First, then, we set out the epitomized form of the structure underlying the record of the offering of Isaac:





Moriah (verse 2) is the place of the revelation of the BASIS of God's Ways in Grace, the place of the "ram in the stead," looking on to Horeb, the place of the revelation of the CHARACTER of those Ways, unfolding what is in His Heart, the place of the Smitten Rock (Exodus 17:1 1 Cor. 10:4).

B Abraham...Here (am) I

B Abraham, Abraham...Here (am) I

The two calls: the first of them at the start of the trial, the testing, of Abraham's Faith; and the second when the point was reached where concerning that faith God could say "Now I know." God did not try Lot's faith, Sodom did that, but Abraham was "the Friend of God" and rendered the "obedience of faith."

Note the repetition of "thy son, thine 'only' son." The word "only" is the rendering of the Hebrew word "yachid." Isaac was, of course, not the only son of Abraham, nor even the first son, but he was the "only" son in the sense of "yachid", a special relationship and deep affection, as between himself and his father. This is brought out by the added words "whom thou lovest" in verse 2. The word "lovest" renders the Hebrew verb "aheb" and this is the first occurrence of it in Scripture; the first specific mention of "love" in the Bible. The first call was that to Abraham to "offer" Isaac; the second to stay his hand, that it be not laid upon the lad.

"Now I know...not withheld." All this pictures the Father who had a Beloved Son Whom He "spared" not, but "delivered Him up for us all." The verb for "withheld" in the Septuagint Version of Genesis 22:16 is "pheidomai" the same Greek verb as is translated "spared" in Romans 8:32.

"Not withheld...because thou hast DONE this" - God reckoned Abraham's faith-obedience as his act. See the tenses in the Greek in Hebrews 11:17 - "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, HAS OFFERED UP Isaac (the act being treated as if it had actually been completed and so the perfect tense used): and he that WAS OFFERING UP his only begotten son (the imperfect tense because God intervened to stop the consummation). So, in Genesis 22. God said: "Because thou HAST OBEYED My voice," showing that He regarded Abraham as having actually "done" it, just as in Hebrews 11. it says "By faith Abraham OFFERED UP Isaac" though the act never was completed.

C Abraham rose up...and went.

C They rose up and went.

Here, we have the repetition of the two Hebrew verbs "qum" and "yalak" - rose up and went. The first for the outward journey; the second for the return journey. The first says Abraham rose up early in the morning, and after he had himself saddled the ass and clave the wood, comes back to "and rose up, and went." There was no delay : Faith does not confer with flesh and blood : it listens to the Voice of God, and obeys.

D And Abraham lifted up his eyes  
D And Abraham lifted up his eyes

Genesis 22. may be read many times without one perceiving the balance and the significance of the two occurrences of these words, but when the underlying structure of the section is set before one, they can at once be seen.

“And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw...THE PLACE.”  
“And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw...A RAM.”

The former speaks of the agony in the heart of the father - here was where the wood, the fire, the knife, must be put into operation and the sacrifice for which the journey had been made, the burnt offering, must be offered. What a cost to the father! And how it speaks of Matthew 27:33. “And when they were come to a PLACE called Golgotha.....they crucified Him.” There is always a “place” to the “purpose” of God, and they had now come to “the place of which God had told him.”

The other occurrence speaks of the intense relief, and of adoration, that must have come to the heart of Abraham when he realized that God was intervening and that there was “a ram” which he was to offer up for a burnt offering” in the stead of his son,” so that, at once, we read how that Abraham called the name of that PLACE, “JEHOVAH-JIREH,” “In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen,” or (as A.V. Margin of verse 14) “the Lord will provide.”

The second occurrence emphasizes very strongly the fact of substitution; when the ram was offered, Isaac, in it, was offered: the ram took Isaac’s place, so that Hebrews 11:17-19 says: “Abraham offered up Isaac” and “in a figure received him from the dead.”

The variations in the renderings of “Jehovah-Jireh” depend upon the vowels that are supplied. The root of Jireh is the R-H, while the word rendered “provide” in verse 8 is “raah,” which means to see, and the root of which is also R-H.

This would seem to be a point at which mention may be made of the fact that the Scriptures abound in figures of speech; that is, that a word or a statement, takes a form different from its ordinary form for the purpose of giving additional force and emphasis. Something of this lies behind the alternatives here referred to above.

“In the mount of the Lord it shall be SEEN”; or  
“In the mount the Lord will PROVIDE.”

We speak of a father “making provision” for his family. What that means is that, looking ahead, the father “foresees” their future need and then “provides” for it, and both are forms of “pro-vision.” And how this speaks to us (does it not?) not only of Him Who made provision here for Abraham, but of One Who foresaw all OUR need, yours and mine, and has made such full and sufficient provision for it, and for us, in His Son, the Lord Jesus: and this, not only for our initial salvation but also, through the Holy Spirit, for a daily walk in and with the Saviour.

Yet another figure is that called Polysyndeton (poly = many, and syndeton = conjunctions, “and”). If this section we are considering is read in a place of worship the “ands” are hardly noticed, and indeed, some readers will leave some of them out, but if you read the passage to yourself and each time you come to an “and” you pronounce it aloud, you will soon realize the presence of this figure. Note, for instance, verses 9 and 10 where the repeated “ands” mark off and emphasize the significance of every detail, and the deliberate steps (and oh! at what a cost), which Abraham took. The same is found again in verses 13 and 14 in describing his subsequent actions, emphasizing each step and movement.

- E Abraham said to his young men, Abide here, I and the lad will go yonder and come again to you.
- E Abraham returned to his young men.

The “come again” and the “returned” are both renderings of the same verb in the Hebrew. These references speak of “resurrection.” Abraham knew that he was to go to the place of which God had told him and there offer up Isaac, but he acted “by faith...” accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead.” Hebrews 11:17-19, and so he said to his young men “we will come again to you.” Isaac was a child of promise, born to Sarah when she was long past the time for childbearing, and when Abraham’s body was “as good as dead” (Romans 4:16-21). Abraham believed in the God “Who quickeneth the dead.” He had received Isaac as it were “from the dead” once, the gift of God in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham and Sarah; why should not he receive him again the second time from the dead (this time after he had been offered) from the same Hands?

- F d. Wood....fire....knife, taken.
- F d. Altar built, wood, knife, taken.

It will be noticed that in the second of these there is no mention of the “fire.” The fire was, of course, to consume the sacrifice, but God was calling upon Abraham to stay his hand, so no fire was needed, THEN: doubtless it was used when the ram was offered in the stead of Isaac. The offering was consumed that all the perfection of the victim might ascent in acceptable fragrance. And how this speaks of another and a Greater Offering: that of the One “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

- F e The Wood laid upon Isaac
- F e Isaac laid upon the Wood

It is possible to read Genesis 22. many times without the lesson of this balance being realized, but when the chapter is seen in its structural form, throwing it into prominence, it comes home, focusing one’s thoughts upon the Saviour Himself (Philippians 2:6-8), thus : -

### **The Wood laid upon Isaac**

Being in the form of God  
He emptied Himself  
A Bond Slave  
The Likeness of Men

### **Isaac laid upon the Wood**

Being found in fashion as a man  
He humbled Himself  
Obedient to death  
The Death of the Cross

G f. They went both of them together  
G f. They went both of them together

Again, a very important lesson is stressed by this repetition. In former days it used to be taught that God was an angry God Who needed to be placated, that His wrath was turned against the sinner, and that the Lord Jesus had to go to Calvary to turn away that wrath. In the first place, God's "wrath" is never predicated of Adam who let sin in, nor of sinners, except they be such as those who having "light" and willfully rejecting it "hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). On the contrary "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." So far from God being an angry God needing to be placated, we read in 2 Cor. 5:19, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The truth, of course, is that the Father sent the son to accomplish His Will and that the Son came in a body prepared for Him, with the words, and in the spirit of them, "I delight to do Thy Will, O my God," and they moved on together in that blessed path so clearly presented to us in the Gospel of John: "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me."..."He that sent Me is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone..." "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life that I might take it again..." "No man taketh it from Me but I lay it down of Myself, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father..."I and My Father are one" (one in purpose). And so, in Romans 5.: "God commendeth His Love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." in a manner beautifully pictured here in Genesis 22., in Abraham and Isaac, yet in a sense and fullness IMMEASURABLY greater, the Father and the Son, in very deed...."went both of them together."

And this brings us to the very heart of the passage and of its structure:

G g. "My father....where the lamb?"  
G g. "My son....God will provide Himself a lamb."

Isaac was withdrawn and a ram offered in his stead, but the question of Isaac and the answer of Abraham are of the very core of God's Plan of Redemption.

In the central section of the chapter, G (f. g. g. f.), all the Heart of God is laid bare, and all in His heart is assured of fulfillment, for "God will provide FOR HIMSELF A LAMB."

There is One Who was “led as a lamb to the slaughter”; there is “the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world”; there is ; “the Lion Lamb” of the Book of the Revelation Who shall bring God’s purpose for Him, as such, to fruition for this One was “the Lamb verily foreordained....before the foundation of the world.”

In this chapter “the faith,” evidenced by Abraham in chapter 15., was perfected (carried to its full end) in his works (James 2.), and it is not too much to say that in the events detailed in this chapter ....Genesis 22..... in the out-working of God and in the unfolding of His Purpose of Redemption, lies the foundation of the blessing of Wall the families of the earth” (verse 18), for the TRUE(the antitypical, the real, instead of the typical) Son of Abraham, “his seed” (Gal. 3:16) is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, in this incident, was reached the acme of Abraham’s growth in faith where the most precious gift from God to him was yielded back to the One Who gave it, evidencing, in the most vivid manner, the utter devotion of Abraham to the Lord and His Will. This section does not stand alone: it is the climax of what had gone before, the “After these things” of verse 1.

Here, too, Abraham learned yet more of the character of the Power that would substantiate to him the promises made to him - God is One Who quickeneth the dead. One is conscious of having realized but little of it, yet the truth remains that no sacrifice is too great if you walk with the Risen Christ, and He asks for it.

That which stamped the character of Abraham was Faith-Obedience.

Called to go out from Ur....he obeyed (Heb. 11:8).

Called to offer up Isaac.....he obeyed (Gen. 22:18; Heb. 11:17-19).

All this was noted by God Who later called the attention of Isaac to it as something, which he should follow (Gen. 26:5). Moreover this was not mere “blind” obedience: it was an obedience homed in, and springing out of, a steadily growing knowledge of God and an ever deepening trust in Him as the years of his life sped on.

Is God looking for anything less from us? And shall we leave the consideration of this section of Genesis without a prayer that, by Grace, the Saviour “provided” may be the Saviour accepted and that we may be enabled to experience just such a growing knowledge, just such a deepening trust, and to render to our Lord, in our turn, just such Faith-Obedience?

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Looking back over what has been written above, is it not clear that the method, which the Holy Spirit has adopted, lies in the Principle of Structure? And is it not also clear that that method reveals the clues, the pointers, which the Holy Spirit Himself has left for us in the record itself, to direct our minds and hearts to the things which He would have us ponder and assimilate?

“THE SCRIPTURES....they ARE they which testify of ME....”  
“Come to ME that ye might have life.”

\* \* \*

“Make the Book live to me, O Lord,  
Shew me THYSELF within Thy Word,  
Shew me myself, and show me MY Saviour,  
And MAKE THE BOOK LIVE to me.”

(Now out of print)