

Now this is *the word* which as *glad tidings*, says Peter, has been announced to you. This is now the will of God that we should obey him whom he has commissioned.

If it were necessary to establish this by proofs and arguments, it were easy to adduce many. But I shall only add, as a very strong evidence of the justice of this discrimination, the following fact:—Multitudes who received the Jewish scriptures as containing revelations from God—the former communications and messages of God, are, by the penmen of the New Testament, said to *receive the word of God* only when they obeyed the gospel. Acts iv. 31. “They spoke *the word of God* with boldness;” “*the word of God* increased in Jerusalem.” viii. 14. “they heard that Samaria had received *the word of God.*” xiii. 44. “The whole city came to hear *the word of God.*” 46. “It was necessary that *the word of God* should have been first spoken to you Jews.”

The same remarks apply to the phrase “*the word,*” without any discriminating epithet, such as “*the word* which God sent to Israel”—by John. “Labor in *the word* and teaching.” “If any one obey not *the word.*” “They received *the word* with all readiness of mind.” And so in every passage in the Epistles where there is no peculiar direction given to it from accompanying explanations.

Having so far traced the exact import of the phrase “*the word of God,*” and “*the word,*” in the apostolic writings, I proceed to notice the various epithets which are used to designate the peculiar character of the word of God, or the gospel.

It is called “the word of reconciliation; the word of life; the word of his favor; the word of faith; the word of truth; the word of righteousness; the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”—Such are the titles and descriptive epithets by which the word of God is recommended to us by its author. It is the word which reconciles man to the divine character, will, and government. It is the word through which life is communicated to man, and by which he comes into the enjoyment of life. It is the word of faith, the subject matter of the christian’s belief, and the means by which we have confidence in God. It is the word of truth, or *the truth* emphatically, which delivers us from errors and darkness, and imparts to the mind certainty in things unseen and future relative to the divine purposes. It is the word of righteousness by which we are accounted righteous in the sight of God, and by which alone we are qualified to live righteously. It is the implanted word, the word established by the Apostles in the world, which is able to save the soul. In a word, it is the word of God’s grace, or favor, by which alone we do enjoy the favor of God here, and are prepared to enjoy it forever.

The attributes of this word are strikingly displayed in the apostolic writings. It is called the *living* word, the sword of the Spirit. In one period Paul gives us a full description of it. Heb. iv. 12. “The word of God is *living* and *effectual*, and more cutting than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the parting of both soul and spirit, and