

# “I have given them **THY WORD**; and the world hath **HATED** them.”

John 17. 14,

**T**HE world does not always hate religion. It is religious in its own way. It approves honesty as “policy.” It applauds respectability. But there is somewhat which raises opposition. And that is “Thy Word.” “Thy Word is Truth,” says 17. The human will does not like the “legalism” of truth, but the freedom of Judges 21. 25. The term “legalism” is often a catchword, to kill an unanswerable argument for the Lord’s appointment. “Call it by a bad name. Then many will fear it.” This seems the devil’s aim. Beloved children of God, shall we give way to this? Surely our hearts refuse? What if tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word (Matt. 13. 21), shall we be offended? The Word is so searching, and so comprehensive. “I accept it to a certain extent.” Nay, we must acknowledge the authority of the whole, with love’s simple “must.” A grateful “must” is a beautiful “must.” “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them” (John 17. 8). Precious thought. It is enough that we have His words. Faith needs no more. Human reasoning objects in vain. “This is not reasonable,” and so forth. There is *nothing* legal when our hearts love that which is appointed. *Condition* decides our standpoint. It is not legalistic to breathe. I do not feel myself “bound” to eat, by some *external* law against which I fight. The law is written in my very feelings, and the law of Christ is in the inward parts of *His people* (Jer. 31. 33).

“I have given them *Thy Word*.” Mohammedans rightly say that we are a people who, at least, possessed a Divinely given book. They erroneously add that they are the same. But if only we had a spiritual reverence parallel with their “natural” regard for *their* book! Truly the children of this age are often wiser with a view to their generation than the children of light (Luke 16. 8), and often put us to shame. “I have given them *Thy Word*.” And our possession is to be our characteristic. How do we value, and act on, this Word? Is there a reality in our spiritual use thereof? It is blessed to possess the Word of the Lord, and to walk in the Spirit accordingly.