

The New Theology.—This movement, the theologian's latest attempt to amalgamate religion and philosophy on a semi-metaphysical basis, is a sign of the awakening of the world to the glorious news, the second coming of Christ, namely, the knowledge that we are all spiritual beings
 5 in heaven now, each an individualisation of the Christ, God's consciousness. Some of those who partially see the truth are trying to fit it in with their old ideas. This is impossible. New wine cannot be put into old bottles. Consequently they are continually finding themselves in an absolutely illogical position.

10 Many, for instance, believe that God made the material world for some good reason, and that the spiritual man, the perfect, divine likeness of God, which always has existed and always will exist perfect, is, in some way impossible to explain, improved by the troubles to which the material man, whom they do not recognise as merely a counterfeit, is being sub-
 15 jected. Others doubt the miracles of Jesus, failing to perceive that matter being a false concept of "thought," appears and disappears in accordance with the thought held. The New Theology is simply an attempt on the part of the more spiritual workers to break through the chains of old theology that have hitherto fettered them, and they are getting closer and
 20 closer every day to Truth, lifting the human thought heavenwards.

"If Christianity is anything at all, it is the teaching of absolute Truth; and if absolute Truth is not scientific, then there is no science in the world" (Frederick Dixon).

HOW TO UNDERSTAND ADVANCED WRITINGS

25 A difficulty that has, unfortunately, prevented many able thinkers in the past from trying to understand the Bible is that they have not apprehended the real meaning of inspiration, which is due to the normal action of God on a human being, that causes him to exceed his usual capacity, and enables him in a scientific way to obtain otherwise hidden knowledge,
 30 by thinking of God. "We are, indeed, more than we know, and occasionally hear ourselves utter things we know not" (Emerson).

Misinterpretations of Truth.—It has been often said that you can prove anything to be true from the Bible, and that all sorts of meanings can be "read into it," attributing to writers statements of facts that never
 35 entered into their calculations. The same accusations have been levelled by some against correct interpretations of spiritually scientific writings.

There is only one permanent scientific basis of all truth, and upon this foundation all true statements must rest. This being so, they do not admit of any possible final mistranslation, because truth understood can always
 40 be demonstrated in visible proof of its right reading. Every true statement thus proves itself consistent all through the degrees of our understanding of its meaning up to infinity.

The correct reading of any statement will always be demonstrable if true, and will also be found consistent with progress in all its degrees
 45 upwards. These degrees are absolutely independent of any direct intention on the part of the writer, who can never change the original root meaning,

and therefore infinite significance of the words used to express even the simplest statement of truth. All discoverers of truth will tell of the continual unfoldment of their own early written expressions, as they rise to the higher understanding of Truth.

Nothing is so dangerous as to judge any interpretations of scientific writings not as yet tested by those judging. Misjudgment by such critics would place them under a serious disadvantage until the right interpretation is proved by demonstration.

Definition of "The Scriptures" or "Canonical Writings."—"The charter of our inheritance and the security of our standing" (Charnock). 10

That "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) is a scientific fact of deepest moment, but to apprehend it fully, necessitates a clear understanding of the real meaning of the word "scripture." There has been attached to the term a specific significance as applying to the written record of the Bible or Canon of Scripture. This, while allowable, should not be wrongly supposed to narrow in the very least its fuller meaning, which can only be discerned in the light of absolute Science. A knowledge of Science is required in order that "the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New" should not confuse one. 15 20

The dictionary defines "scripture" as "primarily a writing," while it defines "writing" as "the act of forming letters with a pen; any written composition." "Letter" is defined as "a mark or character." What a vast flood of light is thus thrown upon the word "scripture," now that absolute Science has revealed to us the truth that the whole spiritual universe and man in reality is the graphic expression of Mind, a perfect image and likeness of God, and from its minutest details to its infinite All, "unbreakable," and eternal, because mental, spiritual. The very fact of the "breakableness" of all material phenomena proves their illusive nature as being wholly foundationless. 25 30

The word "scripture" is absolutely consistent throughout the entire human grades or shades and degrees of its meaning. It is applied by the infant thought to the Bible as the truest writings, and the law of God as there set forth is final and unalterable. Thought outlined by God is eternal. None can interfere to prevent the action of this law of God. Any and all thoughts *not* outlined by Life, Truth, and Love, as God, are illusions, breakable, and eventually bound to disappear. The Bible itself contains its own proof, because it answers to this standard of demonstrable truth. The original, actual, and eternal canonical writings are in the original sense of those words, the living realities, the *spiritual manifest effects of God's law*. 35 40

Fear of Criticism Betrays Doubt of Truth.—Truth does not shirk or fear the strongest light that may be thrown upon it. Indeed, the intelligent criticism of honest inquirers leads to the elucidation of partially understood facts when based upon Truth, and such inquiry is welcomed by every scientific and therefore true religionist. The difference between the truly wholesome agitation of honest inquiry and a mute, stolid, unquestioning acceptance is as great as that between a keenly active circulation in the human organism and the torpidity which ultimates in atrophy and death. 45

Harnack describes the critical science of the present day as "a dance of death," and the higher critics as "men who live for a time on the smell of an empty bottle." This is because they take away what they think is poisonous mental food, without giving us anything in exchange.

5 The spirit of modern criticism, which many have feared was undermining the authority of the Bible, is merely a sign of the dawning intelligence of the age. Although it may appear to some Churches to shake the very foundation upon which they thought religion to be built, it should be wisely welcomed by them, as it is merely the removal of the false ideas
10 which hitherto have, in places, hidden the real value of the precious stone that is within. This removal of encrusted theories enables it now to be cut and polished, so that the whole world may view and understand its beauties, when, like the diamond, it will be found that each facet but reflects new light.

This is equally true, both of the Old Testament and of the New.
15 Romanes, one of the leading scientific men of the age, has stated that there is not one of the doctrines and teachings of Jesus, "whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere, which the subsequent growth of human knowledge has had to discount."

The Bible the Book of Books.—"The regulator of the rights and
20 duties of all; a universal charter" (Lacordaire).

Our Bible is a wonderful and indeed priceless treasury and collection of writings, by far the finest and most valuable that have ever been gathered together.¹ It is always an interesting book; and when understood, its deeper meanings become awe-inspiring. It is difficult to imagine ever
25 getting tired of studying it. D. L. Moody has said: "I believe the Bible to be an inspired book because it inspires me." A mine of wealth, it contains jewels of every kind and pearls of great price, which can be found directly you have the "Key"² that opens up the spiritual and scientific interpretation, in which lies its real value. Not only is the history of the world
30 given in detail, but although "of that day and that hour knoweth no man," the approximate time of the end of all evil, the way in which that end is coming about, and the important accompanying details, are given. All the important particulars of future international relations, for instance, can be found therein. It may be added, however, that in view of facts thus brought
35 to light it is obvious that any time spent in such research for material details would be better employed in mitigating impending evil by scientifically destroying the wrong thoughts which are laid open in the Bible for the benefit of the world.

Difficulties in Understanding the Bible.—"Now we have received,
40 not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:12).

¹ "The Bible is the learned man's masterpiece, the ignorant man's dictionary, the wise man's directory" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 364, Mary Baker Eddy). At
45 the same time "The Sermon on the Mount, read each Sunday without comment and obeyed throughout the week, would be enough for Christian practice. The Word of God is a powerful preacher, and it is not too spiritual to be practical, nor too transcendental to be heard and understood" (*Message for 1901*, Mary Baker Eddy).

² *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Mary Baker Eddy).

The surface reading of the Bible is historical and full of inspirational types. Until you have the "Key," you will continue to find it difficult to understand, as our knowledge and interpretation of it have hitherto been so very limited. A portion of it is inspirational in the highest possible sense, such as Revelation, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and that wonderful but little-studied book of Esdras. Even the grouping of the books, chapters, and verses has unquestionably been governed by the same Principle; a knowledge of the meaning of numbers shows this clearly. Possibly there have been mistakes made in compiling it, and naturally there are many mistranslations, now, in the light of Truth, easily discernible, and so no longer misleading.

Taken as a whole, when even partially understood, it is an unailing guide to man. It is being found of practical use in every department of life; for confirming one's work, and for enabling one to understand what is happening and is going to happen, and so seeing what should be done to minimise the troubles coming upon the world. In fact, it contains almost everything that one wants to know, and proofs of this are being received daily. This is now being recognised in differing degrees by a rapidly increasing number of earnest students, who have recognised the "little book" of the Apocalypse (Rev. 10:9). When understood in its true meaning, the Bible will be found to be a safe and scientific guide to Truth. The basic facts of God and creation, as there set forth, educate the student to wisely discern between good and evil.

Professor Sir J. R. Seeley has said that "The greatest work of individual literary genius shows by the side of the Bible like some building of human hands beside the Peak of Teneriffe." As one advances it will be found the most fascinating book possible; indeed, it is most difficult at times to tear oneself away from it. The world is now finding this out.

In 1895 it was estimated that during the preceding three years there had been more Bibles sold than in all the previous years. This increase must have continued steadily since. In 1909 there were over 13,000,000 copies issued by the Bible Societies alone, of which over 3,000,000 went to China. When it is realised that since its foundation in 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society has issued over 300,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, one-third of this total in English, and that the Bible is translated into over 500 languages, some idea of the numbers now studying this book of books can be obtained.

One difficulty in understanding the Bible is that each passage has a threefold significance, and needs to be interpreted from the three points of view from which human consciousness has viewed existence, before its fullest meaning can be gained. Of these three points of view—the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual—the latter alone is of deepest import.¹ It is partly owing to this that there is such a difference of opinion

¹ Since writing the above I have found that in the fourth book of *De Principiis*, Origen, one of the ablest of men, and well versed in occult matters, explains at length his views on the interpretation of the Bible. It has (he says) a "body," which is the common and historical sense; a "soul," a figurative meaning to be discovered by the exercise of the intellect; and a "spirit," an inner and divine sense, to be known only by those who have "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5).

with regard to the Bible. One man will take the spiritual interpretation, another the material. The third will sometimes take the spiritual and sometimes the intellectual, and often two men will lose their tempers over differing interpretations of a certain passage, and part with the reverse of
 5 Christian feelings towards each other, instead of being absolutely loving, and helping each other to a better understanding, by calmly and intelligently submitting their different points of view, as would be the case if they knew how to think scientifically and therefore rightly. When endeavouring to gain or to express the spiritual meaning, if you continu-
 10 ously try to think of God as Truth, and man as knowing and speaking truth, as clearly as you can, you will find it to be of the highest possible value. Perhaps no command has been so little understood as that the Sabbath day should be "kept holy." Primarily it was a resting from the exercise of creative power. No man is keeping the Sabbath holy who is
 15 maintaining the reign of false mental law, which is productive through the human being of all the sin, disease, and death of to-day. There is only one law to obey, and that is to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves.

The real difficulty and real value of the Bible lies in its spiritual interpretation. Dr. Rudolf Steiner, a German scholar of repute, writes: "No
 20 man can rightly understand the historical truths of such documents as the Gospels, unless he has first experienced within himself the mystical meaning which they contain." This understanding can be obtained when the meaning of the words "The kingdom of God is within" is grasped.

To study the Bible properly, not only such books as Cruden's *Con-*
 25 *cordance*, Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and various translations are useful for reference, but also a dictionary such as Webster's, so altered has the meaning of Biblical words become through the endeavour to make their significance suit our late theological ideas. Young's *Analytical Con-*
 30 *cordance* is useful, as it gives the original Hebrew and Greek words used, with their literal meanings.

We cannot pretend to have a real knowledge of the Bible until we know far more than presents itself on the surface. We cannot even know how to study it properly until we gain the understanding of the principle of its
 * numerical structure through unfoldment of the meaning of its numbers and
 35 names. As an instance of this, see I Samuel 23, verse 28, and Revelation 13, verse 18.

Professor Huxley has written as follows: "It appears to me that if there is anybody more objectionable than the orthodox Bibliolater, it is the heterodox Philistine, who can discover in a literature, which in some respects
 40 has no superior, nothing but a subject for scoffing, and an occasion for the display of his concealed ignorance of the debt he owes to former generations.

"Twenty-two years ago I pleaded for the use of the Bible as an instrument of popular education; and I venture to repeat what I then said: 'Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book has
 45 been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history, and that it has become the national epic of Britain; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind, who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries, and other

civilisations, and of a great past, stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised, and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between the eternities!' The Bible has been the Magna Charta of the poor and of the oppressed. Down to modern times no State has had a Constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account; in which the duties, so much more than the privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Nowhere is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State in the long run depends upon the righteousness of the citizen so strongly laid down."

Numbers and Names.—There is an immense gain in even a slight knowledge of the deep significance attached to every number and to their groupings. All matter is vibration, and can be reduced to its numerical value. No one can pretend to have a scientific knowledge until he understands the principle underlying the science of numbers. Lord Kelvin writes: "I often say that if you can measure that of which you speak, and can express it by a number, you know something of your subject; but if you cannot measure it your knowledge is meagre and unsatisfactory."

This significance naturally attaches to names. These are only groupings of numerical vibrations to convey certain definite meanings. Important historical events are constantly recorded in a mere name, and handed down to all generations. So universal was this method that if you look up the meanings of names in Cruden's *Concordance*, and follow each as it appears in the Bible record, a mere novice studying the Bible will rapidly arrive at an excellent bird's-eye view of the material history and its spiritual interpretation. In fact, a beginner, paying also due attention to the meaning of numbers, would speedily outdistance the most experienced Bible scholar who has failed to explore this mine of wealth.

Anglo-Israelites.—We need also to understand the references to the Anglo-Israelitish race,¹ opening up as they do the accuracy of the prophecies with the details of the history of these latter days and the necessary steps to be taken to bring about the end of materiality. This subject is well worth investigation, and discloses facts which have an important bearing on the great changes shortly about to take place.

Bible Symbolism.—With the ancient writers in the Bible, symbolism is largely used throughout, partly for the purpose of brevity, in order to save the large amount of writing that otherwise would have been requisite. "I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets" (Hos. 12:10). In *The Treatise of the Tilling of the Earth*, by Philo Judæus, he points out that Moses through his great knowledge "was

¹ Professor C. A. L. Totten, of Yale University, says: "I cannot state too strongly that the man who has not seen that Israel of the Scripture is totally different from the Jewish people, is yet in the very infancy, the mere alphabet, of Biblical study, and that to this day the meaning of seven-eighths of the Bible is shut to his understanding." Remember that this is seven-eighths of the material meaning.

accustomed to fix the most felicitous and most expressive appellations" to all things. In referring to the portions of the Bible said to have been written by Moses, he says: "In the allegorical explanations of these statements, all that bears a fabulous appearance is got rid of in a moment and the truth is discovered in a most evident manner."

I may mention a few of these symbols. In the story of Adam and Eve the serpent symbolises "human allurements." This is not always the meaning of a serpent, as the serpent referred to in speaking of Dan symbolises "sound judgment," and a brazen serpent typifies "endurance." Words are used, not casually, but with an underlying definite meaning. For instance, take the word "horse"; this is used as symbolising "appetites and passions." A "rider" consequently is used as a man who, having no skill, is carried away, thrown off, and comes to grief. A "horseman," on the contrary, is the skilful rider who holds under control the "appetites and passions." Again, a flock of sheep refers to everything in a man's consciousness. A "shepherd" leads the flock away from folly, injustice, etc., whereas the "keeper of sheep" allows them to surfeit themselves on anything that comes to hand, and consequently they suffer. The effect of the symbolism is lost to the Western mind owing to the differing conditions. We cannot appreciate the symbolism of water as the essence of life, any more than that of the shepherd, until we understand the conditions in the past.¹ The Chaldees made a special study of this symbolism, and Abraham and Moses were evidently well acquainted with the knowledge gained therefrom.

Symbols.—It is also necessary to appreciate the usual meanings attached in the East to the symbols so freely used by the writers. Before the end of evil, it is essential that all these meanings must be openly declared to the world by those who understand them, so helping to make clearer the vital and scientific teaching of the Bible. Not a moment need be wasted in studying these subjects apart from the Bible record, as all knowledge of necessary references, etc., comes naturally to those who pray in the right way, and rely upon prayer to obtain such knowledge. Valuable time may be saved, and far deeper meanings discovered, by utilising the power of gaining knowledge through inspiration. "God . . . giveth wisdom . . . and knowledge. . . . He revealeth the deep and secret things" (Dan. 2:20, 21, 22). Paul said: "When it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, . . . immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood . . . but I went into Arabia. . . . Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem" (Gal. 1:15-18).

INSPIRATION

"What else have science and religion ever had to fight about, save on the basis of this common hypothesis, and hence as to whether the causation of such or such a phenomenon has been 'natural' or 'supernatural'? For even the disputes as to science contradicting scripture, ultimately turn on the assumption of inspiration (supposing it genuine) being 'supernatural' as to its causation. Once grant that it is 'natural' and all possible ground of dispute is removed" (Romanes).

¹ See *The Song of our Syrian Guest*, by W. A. Knight.