

to instruct us." Job, who is considered still older, said, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

I know the veneration there is for the Scriptures. Taken as a whole, it is far too high. Many are shocked at the idea of not believing in the plenary inspiration of the book from beginning to end.

But, my friends, we must learn to read this as we should all books, with discrimination and care, and place that which belongs to the history of a more barbarous age where it belongs, and never take the wars of the ancients as any authority for war in this enlightened age. It has good and evil in it, and because men take it as authority is one reason that truth has made such slow progress. Mark how it has been used to uphold the great crime of human slavery. Mark how the cause of temperance has been retarded by quotations from this book on the subject of wine. Friends have had to suffer because they dared assert that war was wrong in every age of the world. Many thought war conflicted with some of the testimonies of the Bible. But we are learning to read the Bible with more profit, because we read it with more discriminating minds. We are learning to understand that which is inspiration and that which is only historical, for the righteous judgment that comes of the right spirit dares judge all things,—“Ye shall judge angels,” how much more the records of the ancients. It is time that we should learn to take truth for authority and not authority for truth, and these pages, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, contain truths. “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted; if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” This is an evidence that Cain knew what “well” was. From that time through all the ages of the past down to the present, not in the records of the Bible alone, but in the researches of those capable of understanding the languages of other

nations, even the most ignorant and barbarous of these, there are many references to the same inward and divine teachings. I heard George Thompson, after residing in British India, speak of an organization found there, the members of which did not believe in war, and would have nothing to do with war-like actions. These evidences in all parts of the world are the fullest testimony to the teachings of the Divine Spirit, independent of man's teachings, showing that the same divine principles of goodness and love are to be found wherever man is found, in whatever age, or nation, or country. We grant that a great deal depends upon the proper cultivation of the mental powers. That where there is ignorance there is barbarism and superstition. But all through the ages there are striking instances of righteousness, goodness, and truth, showing that God hath not left himself without a witness, and these to a far greater extent than biblical history furnishes. If we read the researches and examinations of those who dare think for themselves, who dare publish to the world their thoughts, we shall find that truth has been the same in all ages of the world, that it has ever been given out, as far as the people have been prepared to receive the idea, that “God is the teacher of His people Himself.” We do not need to depend on ministers, Bibles, pulpits, or teachers of any kind; we can go directly to the fountain head, and certainly it is time we should be more enlightened than to look to public preaching, to authority; time that we should do more of our own thinking, and that when we do speak one to another, it should be for edification, for comfort, and in recognition of this inward teaching. We need not direct how, or in what particular path, one or another shall be led. The course will be a very different one as regards special individual duties, as we may be prepared by our different talents, tastes, or education, but all must know these by faithful obedience to the inward monitor. Some are