

How to Study the Bible.

An Address for Teachers and Students.

[T is many years since I took part in a Provincial Sabbath School Convention, and I feel exceedingly glad to be here to take part in this Convention this afternoon. You will see that I am down for a pretty long address, so I shall not stop to make any preliminary remarks.

I want to tell you some reasons why I selected this subject, and I trust you will understand my purpose in giving you these reasons. It is simply that we may for the time being look at this important subject from the same point of view, so far as possible, for I have often thought that the Bible is the worst understood book in the world. Indeed, I have often said modestly that the Bible is the worst understood book in the world; and, as I desire the statement to be taken, I believe it to be strictly true. I intend to say that with respect to its historic meaning the Bible is of all books in the world the most misunderstood. This fact, this lamentable fact, as I regard it, is owing to several unfortunate causes.

The Bible is misunderstood because of false theories of inspiration. Until quite recently, almost every theory of inspiration was more or less mechanical in its character, and the Scriptures were supposed to have been miraculously dictated to a class of men who were unlike other mortals; whereas the Scriptures were composed by men of like passions with ourselves, who spoke or wrote on religious subjects as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, but who made use of a great variety of literary materials of one kind and another in the wisest and best way they knew.