

the Old. If the Old Testament could be shown to be untrustworthy, the principal basis of the New Testament would be taken away. For Christian scholars to ignore the present assaults on the Old Testament, because of their larger personal interest in the New, would be as unwise as the ignoring, by the inmates of a beleaguered castle, of the work of the enemies' sappers and miners at the castle's foundation, because of the inmates' larger interest in the battlements and turrets above.

The apologetic defence of Christianity to-day pivots on a right conception of current questions in the realm of Old Testament scholarship. A right understanding of those questions themselves is possible only through the results of special Oriental research. To promote the intelligent study of the Oriental language and literature among students and teachers of the Bible is therefore the unmistakable duty of every lover of the Bible, and every friend of truth and virtue. In fact, there is no branch of human study which to-day involves larger and more important practical results to society and to the individual, all the world over, than intelligent study by competent scholars in the field of Oriental research.

And the sound sense of the Christian community recognizes this truth as if by instinct. Old Testament study and Oriental research are more prominent even among our practically minded Americans than at any former time in our history, in addition to the still larger prominence of such study in England and Germany. No longer is Oriental study among us limited to Hebrew; nor is that now confined to a perfunctory course in the theological seminary. The colleges and universities are adding Hebrew and Arabic and Assyrian and Ethiopic and Egyptian to their elective courses of study;

with eminent specialists assigned to chairs of instruction accordingly. And here, again, is Professor W. R. Harper conducting a Correspondence School of Hebrew all the year through, with a membership of from five hundred to a thousand at a time; while for recreation he travels over the country, in vacation season, to take the lead in Summer Schools of Oriental Study at various centres of population and influence. Both scholarly and popular books in the field of Oriental research and of Old Testament criticism multiply in every direction; while periodical literature and spoken addresses in the same realm of knowledge are alike newly prominent far and near. And now all the Sunday schools of America are to enter together upon the study of the Pentateuch, at the opening of the new year, with such helps as were never before given to the intelligent understanding of that portion of the Bible, and to the clearer comprehension of the points in the text which are in fresh and vigorous discussion.

Out of all this conflict of discussion good is sure to come. That which is true will only be confirmed by the fullest research. That which is error ought to be shown to be error. Those who are confident that the Bible is God's unique revelation to man have no fear that it will fail or suffer under the severest criticism to which it can be subjected at the hands of man. But that a conflict at this point is in progress is not to be denied. Nor can it fairly be questioned that the chiefest champions of Christianity in *this* conflict are those Christian scholars who make intelligent use of the best results of Oriental research. Hence to bid them God-speed, and to aid them as we may in their good work in behalf of all that is dearest to us and to ours, is our practical duty of to-day.—*Sunday School Times*.