

How should we study the Bible so as to understand it? First, as literature; secondly, as ancient literature; thirdly, as oriental literature; fourthly, as developed literature; fifthly, as inspired literature, for with one or other of these principles every passage may be explained; or, to express the same thing in one sentence, we should study the Bible as ancient, oriental, developed and inspired literature, and we should bring to the study of this literature the same use of reason and the same exercise of common sense that we bring to the study of any other literature.

Before concluding, let me ask you to use the Revised Version in your study of the Bible, for in thousands of places it expresses the meaning much more adequately than the Authorized Version does. Let me also ask you to pay particular attention to the marginal readings in the New Revision of the Old Testament, because they are generally better than those which stand in the text. But for the length of this address, I would like to present some examples of superior rendering from both the Old and the New Testament; but I will content myself with giving only one, and I give that because it leads me naturally to my closing thought.

In the Authorized Version, the first line of the 130th verse of the 119th Psalm, is wrongly rendered, "The entrance of thy words giveth light;" in the Revised Version, this part of the verse is rightly rendered, "The opening of thy words giveth light." The rightness of the latter rendering is proved by the testimony of the Greek translation. The idea of the writer is not that of divine truth entering into the mind, but that of divine truth being opened up to the mind. The words of God give light only so far as they are spiritually opened, and some of them are comparatively dark till their true meaning is disclosed.

As teachers of the Bible, therefore, all our study of it should be conducted with dependence on the Divine Spirit for the purpose, first, of getting light from it, and then of walking in that light. In other words, we ought to study it practically and experimentally before attempting to teach it, by homing its truths in our heart, by practising its precepts in our business, and by realizing its principles in our life.