

Substantiation of the Errors drawn attention to in the New Teaching.

It is only as the "precious" is separated from the "vile" one can be as the Lord's "mouth."

1. AS TO THE SCRIPTURES.

being no longer held to be the word of God, here is the quotation, the book, and the page.

The word of God is in the Scriptures. Christ is the word of God. The Scriptures are more the record of it than the thing itself.

What would you say was the value of reading the Bible?

We get things put in shape in our minds, and if you are familiar with Scripture your thoughts are kept within bounds. I have said that if I had to live over again I would study Scripture less and pray more.

Why is Scripture said to make us wise unto salvation? The man of God wants to be furnished with the Scriptures because of their *disciplinary* value (American Notes pp. 125-6)

I do not read those hymns in the letter, I do not read *Scripture* in the letter I try to get the spirit of the hymn and I do. (Weston Notes, p. 82).

The belittling and making light of the "Scripture that cannot be broken" seem quite appalling as one reads these quotations, being reduced to that by which "your thoughts are kept within bounds;" degraded to what, if one had to "live over again," he would "study less," and lowered to something that is merely of "disciplinary value." This is so contrary to that which has distinctively marked a true saint in every age—the written word being so greatly prized as to be meditated on day and night--that whatever else may be behind it, assuredly such language is not of the Holy Spirit. Reverence for the Holy scriptures and assurance of their sufficiency are our resource now.

Bad as this is, there is worse still. The scriptures are denied to be the word of God. They are only the "record" of it, or, as is asserted, the "word of God is *in* the scriptures;" but the scriptures themselves are not here allowed to be the word of God. It is stated "Christ is the word of God," and that too, as if there was no word of God in any other sense. But it is surely recognised that there is the Personal Word, the oral word, and the written word. That Christ is the Living or Personal Word is unquestionable; but, is that to be made to teach that God has no *written* word? The scriptures are as much the written word as Christ is the Personal Word. Then there *has been* the oral word, namely, that spoken by living prophets, by the Lord when here, and by the Apostles; but there is *no such thing* now, no authentic knowledge, whether of the Personal or spoken word, is possible, except from the scriptures, because since the Apostles, there has been no spoken word. Why then falsely argue that because the scriptures are not the Personal Word, nor the spoken word, therefore, they are not God's written word? The right name for this has hitherto been *infidelity*, now, alas! it is being regarded as "fresh light." It seems to have become the fashion in this scripture-depreciating system to cry up the *spoken* word at the expense of the *written* word, whereas to have the scriptures, to have truth communicated in this form, is not something *less*, but something *more*, than to have it spoken by word of mouth, even though it were by the mouth of the Lord Himself. "If ye believe not his *writings* how shall ye believe my *words*?" is Christ's

own decision on the point. Now it would be difficult to over-estimate the immense importance of this for us all, because if you are wrong about the scriptures, what can be right? If scripture loses its proper place all else is out of joint. No correct thought as to any divine thing can be had apart from the scriptures of truth. If these are only man's "record" of what God says, they cease to be God speaking to you when you read them. They at once descend to the level of a human composition on sacred things, treating about God, but no certainty for our souls as to anything so recorded. Then if the word of God is only *in* the scriptures, how will that avail us? You can have the same in a tract or a periodical. Is there any comparison between that and the scriptures themselves as God's very word in *writing*? It is not merely that truths may be found in the scripture, but the very fact of it being scripture, gives it authority as God's word. Everything rightly called scripture is God-breathed and clothed with divine authority as His word. The scriptures are God's "record," and being so, are God's word *itself* in the *written* form, hence sure and authentic, whether about God, Satan, or man. They have not to be proved, they themselves constitute the decisive and final proof on every question. Open the New Testament at almost any page you choose, and an appeal to "It is written" settles everything. The scripture is recognised as an authority that no one can gainsay, not even Satan. The Living Personal Word Himself used the written word. His being, the Person of the Word did not set aside, even for Him, the use of what is *written*. When it behoved Him to undergo the temptation of the enemy it sufficed to say, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and the tempter durst not dispute it without betraying himself. He did not say "That is not the word itself, but only the record of it." He knew better than that, and had to resort to quoting scripture his own way, only to be met by "It is written again." In fact all the Lord's replies to Satan are quoted from Deuteronomy as the Word of God—as words proceeding out of God's mouth—enough for the Living Word Himself, enough for the devil to leave him without an answer, and nothing short of this is enough for us. Christ was born in Bethlehem; spake in parables; rode on an ass; lots were cast for His garment; not a bone of Him was broken; and he said, "I thirst," all that the *scriptures* might be fulfilled. As to His rejection "Did ye never read in the *scriptures*?" As to error "ye do err not knowing the *scriptures*." "Christ died for our sins according to the *scriptures*. He was buried and rose again the third day according to the *scriptures*. After He rose from the dead, "Then opened He their understandings that they might understand the *scriptures* and said unto them, thus *it is written*." The written word was what He valued. The four gospels with all that Jesus began to do and to teach till the day He was taken up are the *scriptures*, God's "record" of His Son. The beloved apostle says "These are *written* that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." Paul, too, received by revelation the truths he taught, and communicated them in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" that is, by inspiration; so that in the end of Romans we have apostolic prophetic *scriptures* in addition to those of the Old Testament. "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world be-

gan, but is now made manifest, and by prophetic *scriptures* according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." The Apostle Peter recognized Paul's writings as the *scriptures*. "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath *written* unto you, as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do the *other scriptures* unto their own destruction." This demonstrates Paul's epistles to be the *scriptures*, that is, inspired writings, having the authority of the Word of God, and then we find Paul himself putting the keystone on all and every part of it, by the comprehensive declaration, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," whether Old Testament or New Testament, written or to be written; in short, whatever has a right to the title of scripture is God-breathed, and has the God-given name by which He willed, what was to be received as His word, should be called, that of which it is said, "The scripture foreseeing," Gal. 3 : 8, as the final appeal. Thus Paul completed the word of God with respect to the divine *character* of the *scriptures* as *God's written word* (2 Tim. iii. 16) just as he completed the word of God as regards its revealed *subjects*, spoken or written, when he made known by revelation the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1, 25-26). The Colossian epistle itself is scripture. The weak argument has been practised on unsuspecting saints that the scriptures are not the word of God, because Paul's revelation of the mystery is said to have been given him "to complete the word of God," as if this were inapplicable to the scriptures. On the contrary it is pre-eminently the *written word* which would have been incomplete without the mystery of Christ and the church. There is no other word of God now but the scripture, which, apart from the mystery, would not have been complete. The completeness here, however, does not refer to writings or speaking as such, but to *subjects*. One special *revelation* was required to complete God's revealed mind and Paul was the vessel chosen for this purpose. It is not a question of who wrote the last inspired writing, which was added to the word of God. Paul did not write that; but, what is set forth is, that he was used of God to communicate the only divine truth wanting to complete the full circle of the subjects or truths of revelation. There were subsequent inspired communications to enlarge and enforce those already revealed, thereby completing the scriptures as *writings*, but no *new subject* was made known, and consequently in the sense of that passage Paul did complete the word of God as the written word, the scriptures, as far as the totality of revealed topics were concerned.

Again to say that the scriptures are not the word of God until they are believed, and exhort people (as one has heard done) to read the scriptures that they may *become* the word of God, instead of, as God speaking to them, *while* they read, is surely as far from the truth as possible. No doubt the Spirit has to apply the word to make it effectual, and then it becomes the *applied word*, but the scriptures are God's *written word* applied or unapplied, and are so, independently of their being received or rejected. Scripture is the word of God because it is God-breathed or inspired, not because it is believed. In fact there is no such thing as true faith apart from the belief of a divine testimony or word of God.

Suppose two individuals read a portion of the scriptures. The heart of one is touched by what he reads and he receives it, while the other reads and remains in his unbelief. Does the fact of its being the word of God depend on the faith of the one who believes, or is it the same for both, only not trusted in by the other? If not received, the word of God is of none effect, but because it is His word, it has no less authority, and the unbeliever is guilty for not accepting it as such. It does not *profit* unless mixed with faith, but it is the word of God all the same. It does not become the word by believing, nor is it any less the word by disbelieving. If it is not God's very word *before* being believed, how could any one make God a liar by not believing it? Scripture has intrinsic authority because of what it is in itself as God's written word, and is as powerful for the condemnation of the unbeliever as it is for the blessing of the believer. Receiving it does not make it the word of God, nor rejecting it unmake it. Christ is the truth *objectively*, the Spirit is the truth *subjectively*, and the scriptures are the truth *verbally*. "Thy word is truth," and we have to "hold fast the form of *sound words*." We know nothing about divine truth in any form except from the written word, and to imagine we can is to delude ourselves, though the Spirit alone applies it. As for not reading 'scripture in the letter,' there is no christianity unless we do. Take all its grand facts, such as the incarnation, life on earth, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of our Lord Jesus Christ, *only in the 'spirit'* and not in the "letter," and where are we? See where this error leads. It would mean a spiritual incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming, of Him who was born, lived, died, rose, ascended, and is coming again, all in the 'letter' of scripture. If not, there is no hope for us. Are saints prepared for the consequences of anything so fatal?

As for the absolute correctness of the statement Man's 'I THINK' has taken the place of 'It is written;' let any one take the trouble to look over, say, the first ten Readings in the American book and he will find:—

1st Reading Six times "I Think" 2nd ten times. 3rd nine times. 4th eighteen times. 5th twenty-two times. 6th eighteen times. 7th eleven times. 8th twelve times. 9th sixteen times. 10th twelve times.

That is to say, no fewer than 134 "I think's" in the half of one book, not to mention all the other publications, and not counting "I don't think," "I suppose," or "I daresay." If this is not man's "I think" taking the place of "It is written," it would be difficult to say what is. We do not want any *man's* "I think. We want what *God* says. Unless the truth is given out with the distinct certainty that it is God's truth, and not the mere opinion of the one who gives it, it is worse than useless, because it misleads. Can souls be fed on "I think?" No doubt one man's "I think" is as good as another's, but neither of them is worth anything. Yet sad to contemplate, all these human "I think's" are vainly imagined to be the "spirit," while what God infallibly says in words inspired by the Holy Ghost is, alas! disparagingly called the "letter." That the written word of God should have to be defended and vindicated with respect to those, who once so loved, revered and studied the scriptures as the Word of God as to distinguish them from all other christians, is surely evidence enough of a deplorable falling away, affect to deny it who will?