

Scriptural Precision and Discrimination

THE LAW OF CRITICAL THOROUGHNESS should govern all biblical study. Nothing should be deemed unimportant in the sacred narrative. To know the parties in a transaction, the place, time and circumstances, the causes and consequences of an occurrence—all are needful. “The historical *what*, its chronological *when*, and its geographical *where*, make history, chronology and geography substantiate the truth of a statement.” (Rev. G. L. Wilson.)

Dr. Howard Osgood, a most thorough student, who searches the scriptures with microscopic eyes, in the following summary gives an example of minute investigation:

Exclusive of proper names the Hebrew Old Testament contains 6,413 different words, of these 1,798 are used but once; 724, twice; 448, thrice; 3,443, more than thrice. In the New Testament, Greek, there are 4,867 different words; of these, 1,654, used but once; 654, twice; 383 thrice; 2,176, more than thrice. Thus the Bible contains in its vocabulary only 11,280 different words. Isaiah uses altogether but 2,186, of which 1,924, are common, and only 262 unique—so brief is the scriptural vocabulary, and so simple it's dialect.

Mr. Newberry reckons the names of God as found in the Old Testament, taken together, 10,900 times; Adhonai, 290; El and Elohim 2,833; Jehovah, 7,000, etc.

What an extraordinary book that must be that makes even such masters in literature feel compensated for such painstaking precision in examining into details! It is superficial acquaintance with the Holy Scripture that makes erroneous interpretations so easy and perilous.

(Knowing the Scriptures: Rules and Methods of Bible Study by Arthur T. Pierson, Los Angeles, California: The Biola Book Room - Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1910, 117)