

## "Ten times better"

F. B. Hole.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 197.)

At the present time great stress is being laid upon science. We are frequently told that scientific training is of the utmost importance, and that not enough scientists are being produced in Universities and Technical Colleges, to cope with and develop the immense fields of human knowledge and discovery, that have opened out during the past half century.

Those of us who are advanced in years can appreciate how tremendous the progress has been, and those who are young, and who consequently have stepped into a world where these amazing devices have become commonplace things, may yet tremble, **if they dare to think**, at the prospect that lies ahead. Destruction of life and property can now be easily achieved on a gigantic scale by evil-disposed persons. And such persons have never been lacking in this sinful world, **nor are they lacking today**.

In our Bibles (A.V.) the word "science" only occurs twice, once in the Old Testament and once in the New, and both occurrences are instructive. In ancient Babylon, 2,500 years or so ago, science was highly esteemed. It ran in different channels from today, but was great in its own selected regions of thought and achievement. A friend who visited the ruins of Babylon a few years ago, gave us a picture he got there, showing how the city must have appeared, according to modern architects, who have examined the ruins. Looking at it, one could only say that, if at all correct, no modern city would approach it in magnificence.

Into this gorgeous treasure-house captive Jews were brought, and amongst them Daniel and his three companions, as related in Daniel 1: 3-6. They were picked as, "Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." The great Nebuchadnezzar meant to get out of his captives all the profit and progress that their scientific ability and reaming could produce. He was just like the leaders of the nations today.

The middle verses of Daniel 1 reveal that the educational and technical training of three years duration — very like a University course today — involved their being fed on rations from the king's table which were doubtless connected with idolatrous rites which he practised. This led Daniel and his friends to decline these luxuries and be content with the simplest food and drink. God honoured the separation that they practised in this matter, and He "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom," as we see in verse 17. The "science" they possessed they got not from man but from God.

The day came when they with others were brought in before the king, that their science might be tested, and in result Nebuchadnezzar found them "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." A great deal of the "science" of Babylon was obtained through various arts, by which men trafficked with demonic powers, so that Daniel and his companions were in competition with a "science" that proceeds from Satanic sources, as well as that evolved by clever men. And the verdict, pronounced even by the heathen king himself, was that the knowledge and science and wisdom that comes from God, was **ten times better**.

The knowledge that was given to Daniel was great, as we see when we read the second chapter of his book. Gaining his science from God, he was able to reveal to the king not only his forgotten dream but also its significance, outlining as it did the whole course of Gentile dominion in the earth and its

catastrophic end, when the God of heaven should set up His kingdom, which will never be destroyed. Into science of this sort no element of human conjecture or deduction ever enters. The same note of Divinely-given certainty is struck throughout all the revelations contained in the book.

Yet the knowledge that is available today for the simplest Christian goes far beyond anything that was made known to Daniel. It has reached us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have knowledge of a high and heavenly sort, which is available for us as the fruit of Divine revelation and not human investigation: knowledge which confers untold blessing of a spiritual sort, as the Apostle Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 2: 1). The Psalmist could say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation" (Ps. 119: 99), If that were true of him in his day, the same thing will be more abundantly true in our day of those who make the New Testament Scriptures of Truth their meditation.

In the New Testament the word "science" occurs by way of warning. No sooner had the true knowledge of God been revealed than the adversary began working to corrupt it. Hence the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, telling him to "keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6: 20). The Greek word, which here is translated as, "science" is the usual word for "knowledge," and we are told that the earliest corrupters of the faith, to whom the Apostle John more particularly referred in his epistles, were known as the Gnostics meaning "the knowing ones," since their title was derived from this word.

In those days there was of course "science" of the Athenian type as we see in Acts 17. Their scientific philosophies were continually seeking "some new thing," and expanding or altering in accordance therewith. What Paul preached with Divinely-given assurance was "ten times better" than all they could produce. But what Timothy was warned against was a more seductive type of "science" than that, though doubtless both types were in view.

The early Gnostics came under cover of a Christian profession. The apostles of our Lord, such as Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men," (Acts 4: 13). So they were able to claim that they presented a more refined and intellectual version of the Christian faith, and what they advocated was really the "scientific" thing. But in clever fashion it cut away the foundations of the faith. It was in opposition, and its so-called "science" was false.

Why should we concern ourselves with things such as these in a magazine entitled, **Scripture Truth?** Because "science" of a false kind, in both these forms that we have briefly considered, is very much the vogue today; and the volume of it is ten times greater than it was in the days of old. There is of course much science which is sound and demonstrably true and effective. It is not of this that we speak; but of the other type, which is really speculative philosophy. And there are a great number of religious cults astray from "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1: 1), which was the theme of the apostolic testimony.

The remnant of the Jews, who had returned to Jerusalem were admonished by the prophet Haggai that God's word and His Spirit remained among them. This we see in verse 5 of his second chapter. It is, thank God, the same today, only in larger measure. As a new year opens, may we exhort all our readers to renewed zeal in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, with an increased sense of dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, who now indwells them.

If all of us are moved to act in this direction, we shall find ourselves possessed of, and by, a spirit of understanding and true science, which is "ten times better" than all we can derive from any other source.

