

Summer Institute, June 4, 1980

Some years ago an Englishman named Bradley wrote a book named Appearance and Reality. I heard Dr. Francis L. Patton who had previously been president of Princeton University and then President of Princeton Seminary, say that Bradley's book Appearance and Reality had ~~better~~ would better have been called, The Disappearance of Reality! Indeed much philosophy sounds like that.

Philosophers can sometimes explain facts in such a way as to make them seem to disappear into thin air. Yet there remain definite facts that cannot thus disappear. When we ram our heads into them it is we not they who are injured. There are many definite facts in this universe that God has created, though all that man knows about them is a tiny fraction of their full meaning and significance. It can be said of almost any sentence one can formulate, even if it is absolutely* true that it is only partial and that it will suggest many questions that it does not answer.

C. W. Lewis has well pointed out that the amount of what we know of what happens on this earth at any given second is less than a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of what actually occurs! Only God can fully know truth.

So when the Lord Jesus said the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth, He did not mean that he would give us knowledge of every fact in the universe. Whatever knowledge we can get of God's universe is valuable, but it is important we recognize that it is only a tiny fraction of what God knows. Most important are those truths that definitely affect our lives and our activities. God's promise was not that the Holy Spirit would lead us to an understanding of all the mysteries of the universe, but that the Holy Spirit would lead us into the knowledge of all that is necessary to conduct our lives in accordance with His will and to accomplish the purposes for which he would create us.

When Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth he had particularly in mind those truths that relate to the way God desires us to live and to mould us into the characters he desires each of us to have and he uses our service for the accomplishment of His wonderful purposes.

Perhaps just a word more here on what I said about the fact that every sentence holds partial truth. I think a good illustration of that is the statement of the relation of the circumference of the circle to its diameter. It says in the Bible that there was a molten sea that was 10 cu. across and 30 cu. around. It gives it in the measurement of a 10 cu. unit and it is absolutely correct-- that the circumference of a circle is approximately 3x its diameter. Yet God did not choose in connection with the details of building the temple to give it in a smaller measure.

We might say, We're not satisfied with 10 cu. areas, we want one cubit. So we say, Alright, its ~~30~~ 31 cu. not 30, around, and its 10 cu. across. But it is easy to find that that is not accurate, so some will say it is 31.4 cu., but that's not and scientists have figured out the formula for, I believe, several hundred decimals! Still they have not reached the end. If I were to make the statement, which would not be true, but if I had made