

SOME SUGGESTIVE FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

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I PURPOSE to set before the readers of *THE MONTHLY* a few facts with regard to the Bible which separate it from all ordinary literature and justify the pre-eminence we ascribe to it when we call it "God's Word." With the knowledge that I am addressing an intelligent and investigating class of readers I shall deem it sufficient to indicate, without elaborating, my lines of thought.

The attention directed to the Bible in its relation to the school curriculum will, I am sure, be sufficient justification for saying something about the Book itself. Indeed, it would almost justify a thorough elaboration in your pages of Henry Rogers' famous dictum, "The Bible is not such a book as man would have made if he could, or could have made if he would." My object will be to state some remarkable things *about* the Bible, and some remarkable things *in* the Bible which will prove that it cannot be the production of man's intellect but has in it the tracings of the finger of God.

At the outset I will ask the reader to notice a striking peculiarity of the Bible as to its form and origin. It has been called a "Miscellany." It is a collection of sixty-six books, some of them very short, none of them very long. There are histories, biographies, poems, allegories, didactic treatises, familiar letters, prophecies; not written by one man or one class or school of men, but by all sorts of people, kings and priests, statesmen and peasants, philosophers and fishermen; not written in one place, but in many places, in the city, in the country, in the palace, in the prison, by the

rivers of Babylon, in the wilderness of Sinai, from lonely Patmos, from crowded Corinth; not written during one generation or one century, but over a period of at least fifteen centuries. Yet in all this variety there is unity. It is one book consistent throughout. Surely an invisible power during all the ages must have been guiding these various writers.

How to account for this unity in the Bible is a nut very hard to crack for those who reject the doctrine of a special Revelation. Bring the guiding mind of God in and the problem is solved at once. The agency is varied and human, but the Book is God's work. Its variety in unity is like nature—God's work, like man—God's work, like history—God's work.

Again, when we look at this Book and compare it with the other literature of the Hebrew people, it is very singular that a people, whose writings, apart from this, are scarcely worth speaking about, should have embalmed the very life of their nation in such a remarkable series of productions. This fact becomes more wonderful when we consider that more powerful contemporary nations, such as the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians had no such records. It is not so long since the literary world was excited over the ingenious interpretation of the Moabite stone. The fire-clay tablets of Assyria and the inscriptions on the tombs of Egyptian kings have but recently, and that dimly, told their story. It is singular that, as a writer strikingly puts it, "The little ark of Jewish literature still floats above the surges of time, while mere fragments of the wrecked archives of the