

stone, or any other legal authority, nor even in that book which not only commends all that is good, but condemns all that is evil. It is called Bibliolatry—the worship of the book. It is charged against Christians of the present day that their reverence for the Bible and faith in its influence are but one more of the absurd superstitions prevailing in the world, and one which has caused the Bible to be to us a charm, a talisman, a fetish. Now, I not only plead not guilty to this charge on behalf of myself and all Christians I have ever known, or for whom I am permitted to speak, but I solemnly declare my calm and deep conviction, that nothing can be more reasonable, more philosophical, more healthful and every way justifiable than the utmost regard we can cherish for the Bible, or the greatest zeal we can manifest for its circulation.

That reverence and zeal are thus defensible because of what the Bible has been to us, as individual men and women. It has been to us the divinely appointed and employed agency for effecting in us the most important change of which an eternity of being admits,—giving us for nature's darkness God's light—the light of His glory, as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus ; peace and hope, instead of compunction and fear ; the loftiest and purest of principles that can guide life, and the most blessed of prospects that can cheer death.

And as truly are those feelings of reverence and zeal for God's words justified by our obligations, as a nation and race, to that wonderful book. There are *three* things which go far to determine a people's greatness : their literature, their morality and their freedom. What we enjoy, as a people, of each of these, we owe, I believe, more to the influence of the Bible than to any thing else. Previous to the dawn of the Reformation, England had a few writers, but little worthy of the name of a literature. One very moderate book-case would have contained all the original compositions of her writers. But no sooner did the Bible become the reading of her masses in their own vernacular, and the study of the learned in Greek and Hebrew, than an intellectual excitement set in, that has continued, and never was more fervent than now, and which has given to the nation a literature not equalled in variety, genius and power, by that of any other people, ancient or modern. It cannot be pleaded that this is a mere coincidence : for just in proportion as the nations of Europe have been affected by the Reformation, just in proportion as the Bible has been freely circulated or withheld among them, has their intellectual life been active or dormant. What have Italy, Spain, Portugal, or even France, contributed of great discovery, great invention, or great improvement, to modern progress ?

How easy to answer that question if asked, concerning the three great Protestant, Bible-reading nations, Germany, Great Britain and the United States. Indeed, when the question is answered in reference to these, it suggests at once another—What is there of value in the civilization of the age that we do not owe to these Bible-reading nations ?