

THE BOOK OF GOOD COUNSEL.

THE Rev. P. M. Zenker, of the Church Mission at Agra, was talking one evening not long ago to a village priest in his temple. After the usual compliments, he asked him which *Shastra*, or holy book, he followed.

"The Gospel of Matthew," he said.

"Which *Shastra*?" Mr. Zenker exclaimed, for he could not remember any sacred book of the Hindus with such a title.

"The Gospel of Matthew," he said again, and held up the book before him.

On seeing what it was, the missionary said, "Yes, that's a good book; where did you get it?"

"When the mutiny broke out," the priest replied, "I was a *chaprassi* (servant) at Agra. The mutineers destroyed the missionaries' printing-press, and scattered the books hither and thither. I picked up this one, and as I was coming home to wait till the disturbance was over, I brought it with me. When I got home I began to read the book, and found it the best *hito padestra* (friendly advice) I had ever seen. Then I read it to several people, and they all considered it an excellent Book of Good Counsel. So I have remained here ever since reading it to them."

"The book is good," said Mr. Zenker; "I know it very well. Don't you think it must have come from God?"

"I can't say," was the reply. "It is the best Book of Good Counsel I have ever seen, so I follow it. If I find a better book I will follow it."

Mr. Zenker then spoke to him on the inspiration of the Book, but apparently the subject had not before occurred to him, and he now seemed to think it of no importance, for he kept repeating his former words, "This is the best Book of Good Counsel I have seen, so I follow it. If I find a better I will use it."

Mr. Zenker then asked, "How do you read this book; right through from beginning to end, or do you take passages here and there?"

"We first read the prayer in the sixth chapter," he said; "then we read about half a page anywhere. After that we have some talk about the passage. Then we read the prayer in the sixth chapter again. That is all."

"Now I do not suppose," added Mr. Zenker, in telling the story, "that such a man could be called a Christian; certainly he would not have called himself by that name. But any Christian missionary visiting that village would have received a welcome both from the priest and the greater part of the people, for the Gospel of Matthew—considered simply as a Book of Good Counsel—had produced purer ideas of God and kindlier feelings towards their fellow-men in the minds of those who had heard it so often read."—*Friend of Missions.*



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