

that His Holy Spirit should teach them all things and bring all that He had said to their remembrance (John xiv. 26). The Bible tells us of a Living Christ, and is interpreted to us by the Living Spirit of God who once moved its writers (2 Peter i. 21). Therefore it stands alone among the "sacred books" of the world in being itself living, not dead. Too often, however, it has been treated as if it were dead. No book is more read and less studied; no book has been more grievously misunderstood, since the Jews who revered the paper on which it was written rejected Him of whom it spake. For it is read more devoutly but less intelligently than other books. And so we hear those who are eager and well-informed on other subjects confess that, while they make some acquaintance with the New Testament, they cannot find the Old Testament interesting. How could they, when they hardly read it at all, or else, like Browning's half-learned, but wholly self-satisfied preacher in "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," "hug the book of books to pieces," reading it piecemeal and haphazard, isolating it from its New Testament elucidations, and never inquiring into those circumstances of time and place without knowledge of which any record of the past loses most of its meaning? Should we venture to treat any other book whose author we respected in such a way? Others again read as a compendium of theology or a philosophical dissertation, what is really a collection of Literature in its four most attractive forms: Biography, that is, portraits of the heroes who make history; Letters, that is, the most spontaneous utterances of human thought; Poetry, that is, the loftiest utterances of human thought; and, above all, History, that is, "philosophy teaching by example."

In these days secular history is being re-written by men with highest gifts of thought and expression. Instead of retailing trivial anecdotes, small personalities, crude statements of character, and partisan arguments, they show which were really the important events of the past, what led up to them, and what new developments of national life and human progress may be derived from them. The materials for secular history are contradictory, fragmentary, and in many ways unsatisfactory. But the materials for sacred history contain all we need know, if not all that