

life and his death. And so too in the words and works of the apostles the Master's love speaks and acts. Nor will a just comprehension and fair interpretation even of the Old Testament in its whole scope and tenor fail to find in it the same universal sympathy and omnipotent love. Send abroad, then, the Scriptures, in order to secure this prime condition of social well-being.

We must circulate the Scriptures also *for the sake of a pure morality*. More weighty is this reason than any other or all of those that have gone before. Have what we may besides, if we have not virtue, we are already lost. Without character there is no true wealth and worth, whether for individual or for nation, but integrity enriches its possessor, though poor in everything else. The moral corruption of Greece and of Rome, wrought a destruction which intellectual genius and culture in the one, and civil and military greatness in the other, were helpless to avert. The spirit of the age and of our land is often said to be materialistic. We believe in matter, and in material wealth. Even education is largely subservient to mammon and utilitarianism in aims. Whether this be or not "the spirit of the age," there is a prodigious amount of this spirit in the age. Success is measured by dollars, and culminates in millions. Men value office for the money it brings, and honour follows in the track of the golden-footed. It probably is not worse now than it has been in the past, nor worse here than it is elsewhere. "The seen and temporal" is before us. It presses upon our attention. It seizes and drags us along. And we love to be seized and dragged. Nay, we run, we rush along this way, for the nature within us answers to the nature around us, and the two are joint workers of the wish and will to find all good here and now.

But we all have also a moral nature. Conscience is not only in us, but of us. It is while we are and where we are. And while it exists it is alive. While it lives it acts. Its voice may seem to have died quite away. There are the loud and clamorous voices of passion. But the whisper of conscience can be heard amid the uproar of aliens. Its whisper is not its own, but the whisper of God's moral law, and that whisper is mightier in authority than the thunder of all laws beside. Man's moral nature lives, and he who degrades himself has a sense of his degradation. He hears in his nature an undying protest against his character. The protest may be resisted, but it remains a testimony of God in man to both the worth of man and the worthlessness of such a man's life.

God's written word is at one with man's moral nature, and at war with his sin. It is God, coming to man from without and meeting God within, God without co-operating with God within to clear man of his own plague, and hold him fast in righteousness. The whole Bible testifies of Christ as the Righteous One, and does its utmost to rivet upon him the reader's gaze. And no man ever looked steadfastly into that face and failed both to see "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and also to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." Bring together all the published works on moral science, all the moral tales and the well-wrought homilies, pile them up together as mountains of dry leaves, and set them on fire. They burn. They are gone. The Bible remains; and in it not only the science, but also the living and life-giving spirit of morals. There can be no sound morality apart from the Bible, but where it goes and works, there is a manhood and womanhood clean and sweet, strong and symmetrical, Christlike and Godlike. Where goes and works God's word, there is honesty in business, purity in politics, and integrity in all things. As we love virtue, therefore, we shall send abroad the Bible.

But there is another and final reason for the work of this society which overtops all the others. *God's word meets the wants of man's religious nature.* Such a nature we have. It belongs to us as men, and like our moral nature, is not only in us, but of us. We all have, we cannot but have, thoughts that go beyond, above, below, time, sense, this world, the universe. We are children of God. In us is the child nature. But of such a nature the one