

INTRODUCTION.

"The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."—I SAM. iii. 1.

"The Bible is an interpretation of the eternal, intelligible to every man through all time in the language in which he was born."—DR. WESTCOTT, *Bishop of Durham*.

"Let us read every word, ponder every word, first in its plain human sense; then if, in after years, we can see any safe law or rule by which we may find out its hidden meaning, let us use it, and search into the deep things of God, not from men's theories, but from His own words."—CANON KINGSLEY.

GOD is silent now as He was in the days of Eli, and for us there is no open vision. In one sense, indeed, He is ever revealing Himself as "the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." With fresh insight into Nature we gain fresh knowledge of His ways, while the course of History is constantly showing us more and more of His will concerning man. But His supreme revelation was when He "spoke unto us in His Son," whom the heaven has now received until the times of restoration of all things (Acts iii. 21, R.V.); and since that Divine voice is heard no longer among us, most "rare" and "precious" is the Book that contains its words, with all the Prophetic teaching that led up to them and all the Apostolic teaching that flowed out of them (Heb. i. 1, ii. 3, 4). We are Christians because we believe in Christ, not because we believe in the Bible. Our faith is centred in a Person, not in a book. But, being Christians, we prize and study the Bible, because we can abundantly prove that in the Gospels we have the authentic record of Christ's life and teaching, that He has set His seal upon the Old Testament as "the Scriptures of the prophets which cannot be broken" (Matt. xxvi. 56; John x. 35; cf. Rom. i. 2), and that the whole New Testament is the work of men to whom He promised