

How many garments has Dorcas's needle put into shape? How many missionaries has Paul drawn after him to the Gentiles? And what shall we say of Him who seems to walk the earth, even now, as an incarnate conscience, with no virtue His presence does not commend, no vice it does not condemn.

4. For the Bible's stimulus to the intellect we keep it in circulation. Two centuries ago, a book as large as an ordinary family Bible was filled with the titles of books written on this one volume. And since the emancipation of the press, what has followed? Take this as an instance: The Epistle of the Romans is a small pamphlet which any workingman can read of an evening after his day's labour, fold it up and put it in his breast-pocket for further consultation; yet, on that pamphlet, over twenty years ago a library of over 5,000 volumes was catalogued. And as to its food for thought, let this be cited: the sermons preached in one year (in the English tongue alone), if printed, would fill 150,000,000 octavo pages. Every one of these sermons gets at least its text from the Bible, and in most cases its course of thought. Now as my brethren around me must join me in testifying, many of these sermons are "poor affairs;" yet it is a very poor affair indeed that does not, at all events, set somebody to thinking how much better the preacher ought to have done, with such a Bible to preach from.

5. For its influence on human society. Take a wide view of the world with and without the Bible. Compare North with South America, Russia with Prussia, Holland with Austria, Great Britain with the peninsula south of it. Look into the wards of cities, the streets, the houses, the hearts of men, and ask for the bearing of this book on what is found there of purity, enlightenment, comfort, hope, and the results are a justification of the existence of a Bible society.

6. Its revelation of salvation is the main reason why we unite for its dissemination. Granting that it reveals to us the best of laws, and the most sweetly reasonable of all religions—for what doth the Lord require of us but that we love one another, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Himself—the law we have broken, every one of us, the religion we have not observed, and what then? How shall a man be just with God? What shall I do to be saved, not only from the consequences of my sin, but—of far greater import—from sin itself? Shut the Bible, and to us there is as yet, no satisfying answer. Come from where it may, be written by whomsoever it will, up until this hour there is no book within our ken that has ever grappled with this dread theme as the Bible has done. It is all but needless to add, none that has proposed a remedy at once so satisfying to both the God-ward and the man-ward aspect of this question. Upon much that men wish it to speak, it says nothing; it does not profess to speak fully, except on the one great theme: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name."

7. And under this revelation we spread the Bible for its inspiration to high endeavour. Here is a short answer to the question, "Is the Bible inspiring?" Certainly it is; for of all books it is the most inspiring, and, if so, to what? Let history answer, let experience continue to assert, let life tell its own tale as to what the Bible has led it to. After the book's own record closes with the missions to the Gentiles, touch whatever has been great and you find the Bible has been there. The preaching of Chrysostom, the confessions of Augustine, the sculptures of Angelo, the glories of Raphael, the "Paradise Lost," the architecture of Wren, the Analogy of Butler, the hymns of Cowper, the whole of the sweetening charities of the church, the enfranchisement, the politics, the parliaments, that have had the relish of salvation in them, what had they been but for the Bible, and what the Bible has directly or indirectly inspired men to do?

8. Specially do we desire the Bible's presence among us for its controlling idea of a sway of love. Notwithstanding its revolt, the earth is still the