

and has influenced the human mind more than all other merely human productions.

Now since God has chosen a book as the medium of intercourse with us, as the means of instructing and saving us, we might naturally expect to find that book adapted to accomplish its object, and therefore fitted, in every respect, to sway the soul of man most powerfully. And such is the fact. The Bible has proved itself to be the most potent of all books. Not more surely and irresistibly does the moon attract the waters of the mighty ocean, than the Bible has ruled the tide of human action. Its histories, biographies, stories—its poetry, proverbs, parables and gospels have won their way to the heart of humanity—kindled genius—coloured the thinkings of whole generations—employed the mightiest intellects in their illustration—taught men how to live and how to die. God does not usually accomplish his purposes by weak or worthless agents; and therefore we should not expect to find His Book deficient in power, majesty or beauty. Were the Bible a feeble or hollow production, it could not, without a continued miracle, have so captivated the attention, or gained a place in the hearts of all nations who have had access to its glowing pages. Let us endeavour, if possible, to discover the secret of its potent influence.

In order that the Bible might become what God meant it to be—a Regal Book—it was necessary not only that it should embody divine *truth*, but truth robed in *beauty*. The book that is to maintain a supremacy over the soul of man must speak to his heart as well as his understanding; must address his imagination and sense of the beautiful; must delight, in order to instruct. And therefore the Bible has been made the most beautiful of books. In this respect it corresponds to the beautiful creation God has spread around us. Why, in nature, are the grand and lovely made to embrace one another, the awful and the enrapturing to rejoice together wherever we turn? Why that beauty in the lightning's glare as it flashes from the dark cloud; or wherefore the rainbow's glorious painting as "based on ocean it spans the sky"? Why is the sunrise so enchanting, or his decline amid flame-curtains so grand? Why the ever-varying beauty of that cloud-drapery, or of the flowers that garland this rough