

THEY DO PRESS INTO IT

BY REV. THOMAS NAITRESS.

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No sentence intenser with truth was ever spoken than that which was once addressed to Jesus. "All men seek Thee." As plants seek the sunlight so does the soul feel after Christ, in the darkness and in the day light, as well as in the broad day of the Gospel's glad tidings. There is no soul but longs for that which Christ has to give, quiet, peace, contentment. Still is this true though there be many souls that have not heard the name of Christ and are strangers yet to the message of the crucified Jesus. "All men seek Thee."

Men not yet naturalized in the country of their adoption clamour for citizens' papers in view of an approaching election, when great civic questions are pending. If men and women were as eager within the Kingdom of God as electors are to throw their weight on one side or the other, there would not be so much uncertainty in the minds of many not yet within who are not pressing as hard as they could wish they were. But in spite of indifference and apparent hesitation on the part of so very many, even of these some are doubtless already within the Kingdom and others very near it. The world is eager to hear of God; to know Him; to be sure about Him; to serve Him too. Are we going to go behind these words of the Lord's own utterance: "The Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it," and expect something less?

The preaching of the Kingdom agitates the world of thought because it is sound doctrine. The powers of heaven are behind it: Christ's life, teaching, and commission to the church; the contrast of truth and falsity; the Spirit of God and of Christ in the world, the light of Science, reflecting upon the miracle of nature, the Providence of God, and the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Someone complained one day of a certain minister that he preached nothing but the Gospel and was "too sound". Splendid criticism that! Though it be given beautiful and sufficient setting let the Gospel always be the gem that is set. That is the power that draws men and women into the Kingdom.

Do we ask evidence to strengthen our confidence? Consider then, that Christianity is the only religion that increases in the number of its devotees at a more rapid rate than the increase of population. Consider that it does this in every country where it has in reality become established. And here are further facts in evidence. Italy—Latin speaking, Catholic Italy—has three million Bibles in circulation; and these are being read. In India it is the University graduates who are paying most marked attention to the Bible, the men who will lead their fellow country men soon and mould their thought. In Russia 1,070,417 copies of the Word of God have been put in circulation in two years. This with the approval of the Bishops and priests of the Greek Church, of the civil governors and of the men with capital at stake in the country.

Ever it is characteristic of those who find the Kingdom that they want others to enter it too. But the heart of every man teaches him that he ought to press into the Kingdom without waiting to be asked by his neighbor to do so. Would'st have citizens' credentials? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved". It is the King's own proclamation.

HIS POWER.

BY REV. FRANK HALLAM

"This is thy work, Almighty Providence! Whose Power, beyond the stretch of human thought."

The moral power of the Bible in the world is a portentous fact. In this nineteenth century of light and learning and science and sneering skepticism, in this nineteenth century of pride and disbelief and criticism, two hundred million copies of the Bible have issued from the printing-press. Voltaire had said that in a century from his day it would cease to be printed at all. Why this unprecedented issue? By what "selection" has the Bible been chosen, out of the ages, out of the countless myriads of books that are crowding the millions of the world's printing-presses, thus to be multiplied beyond the outermost limits of competition? The Bible has been translated into almost every tongue over the earth's surface. Written originally in Hebrew and Greek, it has passed over into Egyptian, Coptic, Arabic, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Latin, Italian, Swiss, Dutch, German, Russian, Norwegian, Eskimo, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and a multitude of dialects and separate lang-

uages among the North American Indians, the numerous tribes of Africa, and the Polynesian and other islanders. Men from "every nation under heaven" may say of these writers, as the strangers at Jerusalem exclaimed under the pentecostal shower: "We do hear them speak in our tongue the wonderful works of God." And wherever it has been, wherever it is—in distant or present time, in torrid or frozen zone, on the mountain-tops or in the plains, on land or sea, in the palace of Victoria or in the mud-hut of her meanest subjects in the boundless forests of the Dark Continent, with the intellectual and the feeble minded, with the great and strong, and with the poor and weak—it is a new force, a superior power, a power embracing and limiting within itself its own genera and species, a power that stands alone in reach and majesty in all the literature of the earth. It is a power that not only speaks of, but "makes for righteousness." It is a power that stirs men out of the stagnant pool of slimy wickedness, and leads them to a sparkling fountain of a living virtue. If it were not inspired the veriest infidel could not deny that it hath ever been inspiring. Men have perverted it in this day and in past centuries, and made it the excuse of passion and of crime. They have persecuted and tortured and assassinated in its name. They have distorted its commands into instruments of heinous cruelty and hypocrisy. So men did make Jesus Christ, the innocent and lofty, the pretext for their bloody thirst. But the Bible has ever been the greatest of all instrumental powers for good. It has inspired men to nobler and grander lives. It has made the greatest heroes in history. It has blessed and purified the soil and atmosphere of human life in every civilized land. It has disbanded armies and prevented war. It has taken away the bloody, brutish appetites of men who fed on men. It has stopped the Roman patrician when he would have exposed his suffering infant to the eagle and the fox. It has stayed the hand of the Fiji savage when she would crush her children's heads against the jagged rock. It has made the world pitiful and tender to the maimed and halt and blind, to innocents and imbeciles, to the aged and infirm, to men so loathsome diseased that they became a walking pestilence. It has lifted the drunkard out of the fiery lake in which would perish his imperishable soul. It has led the robber and the murderer out of the midnight of their crimes into the pure light of pardon and reform. It has made men chain the devils which infested them. It has washed away the foulness of the ancient and the modern Magdalen, and clothed her in the white robe of righteousness. It has built up character until it has become a towering monument of purity and shining strength. The greatest intellects have bowed before it in grateful homage; the humblest slave has looked up to it and found liberty and dignity of soul. It has blessed and elevated society, and wrought its power in civilization, governments, and thrones. It has given to men the courage and the grandeur of the gods; nay, it hath given them the courage and the grandeur of redeemed humanity; because it has given them the inspiration of an unearthly faith, through which they have "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."

Are these the signs of Inspiration? Put the word aside, and ask another question: Are these the signs that these high thoughts of sacred penning, that this unearthly, spiritual force of sentiment came from God? Here is the summing up of evidence: men believed that they wrote by the special power of God; the Jewish nation and the Christian world believed it; the writing constitutes the most marvelous literature that the world has known; its gathering together and preservation seem a miracle of heavenly purpose; the noble thought, the lofty grandeur of the books are incomparable; the unity of the Bible is the wonder of all ages; its spiritual and moral power are unique, tremendous, boundless.

Is this the evidence of Inspiration? It is majestic and convincing evidence of something. We need not care for technicalities and definitions—the Bible is greater than them all. We need not care for biblical mistakes and