

ledge and clearer visions. My simple claim is that the Bible should always be allowed to speak for itself, because my belief is that whatever is essential to human redemption, pardon, purity, and development is written in the Bible with a pencil of light. Again and again I would disclaim saying one word against learned and reverent interpreters of the Bible. I simply wish them to be kept in their right places as elder brethren, and not to be set up as idols, ruling generations of whose progress and advantages they could have had no personal knowledge.

There is a deep sense in which every man must be his own theologian. Human expressions of theology must change because language itself changes, and every tide of time's great sea brings in riches from the land that is beyond, which must be added to the abounding treasures of the church. No one man knows all the truth; no sect has all the truth; that is as certain as that no vision can absorb all the sunshine and no roof can accommodate all the sky. It does seem to me, then, a thing worth doing to send men into all the villages of England who will help the people to read the Bible and lead the people to see that nature and revelation are expressions of the same God, and that both are open to reverent and patient inquiry without human penalty and without ecclesiastical degradation.

We may not, indeed, be always able to send learned men into the villages of England; but I will tell you whom we can send—we can send men who will say to the peasantry of England, "Let us read the Bible in our mother tongue together; let us read the 23rd Psalm; let us listen to the Sermon on the Mount; let us commit to memory the parable of the prodigal son; let us watch and wonder and pray at the cross of the Son of Man." Can such words be read in a right spirit without Jesus Himself drawing near and setting the heart aglow with a love kindred to His own, and making the darkening eventide brighter than the summer dawn? This is what we aim to do: to get men to read the Bible, to read it in the houses of the people, to read it at the bedsides of the people, to read it as the Book of the people, and to make the people feel that, come what may, the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and is an open vision to the broken heart and the contrite spirit.

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### THE BIBLE.

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Viewed merely as a human or literary production, the Bible is a marvelous book, and without a rival. It embraces works of forty authors, representing the extremes of society, from the throne of a king to the boat of a fisherman: it was written during a long period of sixteen centuries, on the banks of the Nile, in the desert of Arabia, in the Land of Promise, in Asia Minor, in classical Greece and imperial Rome; it commences with the creation and ends with the final glorification, after describing all the intervening stages in the relations of God and the spiritual development of man; it uses all forms of literary composition; it rises to the highest heights and descends to the very lowest depths of humanity; it measures all states and conditions of life; it is acquainted with every grief and every woe; it touches every chord of sympathy; it contains the spiritual biography of every human heart; it is suited to every class of society; and can be read with the same interest and profit by the king and the beggar, by the philosopher and the child; it is as universal as the race, and reaches beyond the limits of time into the boundless regions of eternity.

Of all the books in the world the Bible is the only one of which we never tire, but which we admire more and more in proportion as we use it. Like the diamond, it casts its lustre in every direction; like a healing herb, the harder it is pressed, the sweeter is its fragrance.