

and bigoted souls who swear by the Book, but seldom read it; who believe it in the way of a wholesale credulity, but who never seriously ask as to what the Book really means, how it came and how in the wisest way it may be used.

The follies of professing Christians are largely responsible for the misunderstandings and neglect of the Bible. All the influence of its enemies, scientific and unscientific, could never shake the faith of society in the Bible if Christian people fairly illustrated it in their lives.

Then there are people with preconceived notions—godly and well educated people—who care first for a *system* of theology or a *branch* of the Church, and then for the Bible as it can be used to defend the one or the other. These stiff sectarians sometimes make the Bible an offence and stumbling block to broad, scholarly and teachable souls, who care for truth more than for schools and systems and Churches. The Bible is a book necessarily obscure. One must study it diligently and persistently to enjoy it, and non-studious people form the majority in this world. People are absorbed in other things—gain, growth, luxury, and what they call “life,” with its various pursuits and delights. The Bible is a difficult book to study; one is all the while stumbling upon strange allusions and references, obscurities, discrepancies, apparent absurdities, to say nothing about the lofty and mysterious topics which it discusses—topics which it enthrones in clouds and darkness. Another reason for the neglect of the Bible by a large class of people is its severe ETHICAL demands, which strike them as exactions, and which are accompanied by denunciations of human mistakes and iniquities. The Book flashes and thunders with warnings and penalties.

Paradoxical as it may seem in view of what I have just said, it is nevertheless true that the Bible was never so popular as now, and never so widely studied. Remember the appearance of the New Revision in 1881. No modern novel has commanded the sale which the Revised New Testament did ten years ago. It was a surprise to the book trade everywhere. The night before the issuing of the Book in New York the street was blocked with teams awaiting the first delivery, and