

intelligences belonging to other worlds than this

Human life, in the light of its teachings, is invested with a significance and value forever unknown to all hypotheses and philosophies of a materialistic and godless kind. Not in some far-off Zoological Gardens does man find the place of his nativity, a nobler and diviner origin is his, and all the gorilla theories of the past and present are but idle and baseless dreams. Into this century-crowned Book we look again; and along through its wondrous readings, we seem to hear the tramp and voice and din of one hundred and thirty-five generations of men as they come and go. Scattered fragments, thrilling chronicles, bruised monuments, old scarred relics of long vanished ages are here preserved; and through the treasures, records, and memories which these imperishable documents contain, we can feel the moral and intellectual pulsations of that older Eastern world. The short, convulsive sobs of expiring dispensations and dynasties are heard, but all through the bewildering sights and sounds of forty centuries, the moral night, the clash and clang which marked those long and dolorous years, there walks a movement of divinstem form, full of sublime predictions and of glorious hope. Down from the soundless sea of the past there comes to us a wave of blessing, which shall never rest until its circle of benediction is as wide as the circumference of the world's misery and the world's woe.

In this victorious Book, the historic march of eternal principles passes before our view, and through light and darkness, in summer sunshine and terrific, desolating storm, in the life career and end of earth's once populous nations, and amid all the countless changes and evolutions of the swift and solemn years, demonstrate their divine paternity and undecaying power.

For awhile, many of the old and mighty peoples of antiquity rise before us like so many gloomy, barbaric and giant forms, then pass out of sight into darkness, desolation and dishonoured graves. The sepulchres of these mighty dead linger in our world to-day. What strange and huge skeletons of long-buried nations and cities have been disinterred! The glory of oriental monarchs, with all their gorgeous surroundings, their pomp and unstable magnificence, went down into a night upon which no morning sunlight will ever shine. Their iniquities carried them away as a flood, and many of their colossal wrecks lie stranded on the coasts of time, as signals and warnings to the nations of to-day.

As we glance again through the sacred page, we see a line of God's true noblemen, stretching all through the almost unbroken night of four thousand years. What a gallery of heroic and fearless men they make, and how their lives, characters, words and deeds relieve the otherwise immeasurable gloom! Nor is this procession which moves before us on the canvas of inspired history, all made up of beings of a human kind; personalities of celestial character, of unearthly build are here seen, and something of their mission among the crowded ranks of

men is here made known. Through these Bible pages we can feel the pulse-beats of earth's older ages, and of worlds and beings invisible to mortal men. In that touch there is inspiration of the noblest kind, and warning too.

This "dim spot which men call earth" has been in the universe like some great Waterloo, where forces of hellish and of divinstem kind have met in deadliest conflict, and where the largest victories have been lost and won. The battle rages still, but the final triumph will be God's. The sad, sad story of man's fall and loss, his misery, sin and woe, is forever told; but over all the piteous desolation which man's wrong has wrought, there spreads the radiant light of heaven's redeeming theme. This message crowns the Book. This gilds and floods the living and healing page. It is redemption's story which fills this Book with joy, and makes its leaves drop balm for wounded, sin bruised hearts. Over earth's melancholy map it inaugurates a welcome dawn, which shall brighten yet more and more, until the loveliness of a summer's day shall mantle this sad and sinful world of ours. For the coming of that day the weary and sin-laden centuries are ever looking with unfailing expectancy and brightest hope.

Beneath the outer parable or figure of those holy writings, the touching story or the plainer word, we find God's answer to the world's long, deep cry; the richest outpourings of the eternal heart are here; and for a famishing race bread enough and to spare.

Eighteen hundred years have come and gone since the last words in this marvellous Book were penned, and yet how vital and world-arousing are its teachings in this later and progressive age! Not in the rear but away in the front of all books does this volume hold on its way; and its leadership in all that is ennobling, manly and consolatory, will be maintained to the very last hour of time. Nor is this an idle dream or empty guess. Its triumphant march across the storm-swept period of nearly two millenniums, and the rich harvests of far-reaching and beneficent results already gathered, are sufficient apology for the existence, place and power which this Book holds in the world to day, and abiding guarantee for its conquests in the years to come. And such achievements, won in spite of all the fierce maledictions of wicked men, and all the malignant forces with which it has had to contend!

But who can tell the influences, ideas, and streams of holy, upward tendencies its teachings have started and maintained in the great arena where men live and labour, think and grieve, sin and suffer and die? Who can describe the intensity and magnitude of that living human gaze, which has fastened itself upon the revelations of this Book during the long periods of the past? A gaze now representing in its splendid aggregation nearly all races of men, and producing the profoundest feeling, the loftiest thought, and most heroic and beautiful specimens of moral manhood that the world has ever seen. Thank God that the