

REVERENCE FOR THE WRITTEN WORD.

One of the just causes of the growing reverence for inspiration is the rapid multiplication of copies of the Bible. The distribution of the Bible is one of the great wonders of our age. The work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and of the American Bible Society is as thorough and complete as any piece of machinery which the Church has ever called into being. By wise and yet aggressive measures these two institutions, though both still young, have already made the Scriptures speak in between three and four hundred languages and dialects, and every year is adding to the number. There is a wonderful power in just the inspired page. The Spirit goes with the printed word. Drop it anywhere, and it takes root. The new versions have not disturbed, but rather quickened, the general interest in the spread of the word. Much good is served by exegesis. We need to get at the bottom of the word, down to the very root of the original tongues. But there is a certain joy in taking up a volume of which there can be no doubt as to the divine authority. Every page is the revealed word, and has come down to us through innumerable channels. The men who died in testimony of it have gone to their long home. But the thing stands. The book lives. It carries life and light everywhere. The cases are numerous where the simple reading of the page has led to the conversion of souls; no teacher has been near to explain; no preacher has been within reach. Yes, there has been the Teacher and the Preacher—the Divine Spirit has been at hand to apply what He had written through human instrumentality.

The reverence for the truth of the Bible is not impaired by its darker passages. Men sail over seas without knowing their bottom. It is the very depth which makes the sailing safe. What great servant of God has ever succeeded in clearing up all the obscurities? Had he been able to do it, even to his own mind, two things would have been proved—first, that his book was superficial; and second, that his faith ceased to grow. We need a book that is unfathomable to lead us to intenser study and a sublimer faith. Lessing, with all his sceptical infirmity, said: "If God had held in His right hand the Truth, and in his left the search for it, I would have said, 'Give me the left.'" We need what fastens the mind and draws it out and down into the profundities, and attracts it out toward the immeasurable. God has wisely and mercifully given us a book for our guidance which defies our little fathoming line, and yet permits us to glide safely along its surface and reach the harbour in safety. The grand beauty of the Bible is that the more we get at its meaning the more of meaning we see which we have not reached. Yet we have enough to help us in our daily need, enough to teach others, and enough to secure salvation. What if a thousand questions arise which make us stand back in amazement? Shall our faith thereby grow weak? Shall we lose courage? No. Then rather let us take new heart at the value of the treasure we possess, and wait with patience, yet with constant study, the time when the full revelation shall come. The dark glass is for the present. The seeing face to face is the blessed thing of the future. We shall have our new thoughts about the Bible when we get into the better world. Some of these will be, why we did not take it more on trust, why we ever doubted anything; why we became over-eager to solve all the mysteries in a short life; and, above all, why we did not love it more, in storm and calm, in joy and sorrow.—*Christian Advocate.*

THE laying open of the heart is the great design of the Scriptures; happy the reader who falls in with the design.—*R. Chapman.*

THE children of God in the furnace without a good store of Scripture in their hearts are always impatient, struggling in self-will for deliverance, and thereby they do but add fuel to the fire.—*R. Chapman.*