

HOW TO PROMOTE A MORE GENERAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is a book of yesterday—of a very ancient yesterday. It is a library, and the volumes which compose it are of different ages. It was centuries after the first volume went on the shelf that the sixty-sixth was placed there.

Books so very old, and written in languages now dead, and in lands so far away, and under governments and administrations so long ago overthrown, having no sensational modern fiction in them, and no discussions of the current political problems, or of the scientific novelties; books coming over to us from another and extinct civilization, and full of mysteries—mysteries over which the philosophers of all time have grown gray—are books likely to be much misunderstood and much neglected in such times as ours. The Bible is not a new “find” among the ruins of Moab, in the closet of the Sinaitic St. Catherine, or the libraries of Constantinople; it is not, like the “Teaching of the Twelve,” or the Assyrian tablets, or the Moabite stone, a novelty because of its antiquity. It is an old book, with which we have been so long familiar, that it has become to us a very, *very* old book.

Moreover, the simple mention of the Bible to some sensitive souls suggests the divisions and the collisions which its misinterpretations have caused. It suggests the divisions of the Church—Greek, Roman, Anglican, Modern, with sects in all of them and too often full of rivalry and antagonisms. It suggests the assaults of the doubters and infidels, who have been ridiculing, assailing, denouncing with bitterness, for centuries. It suggests the denials and sneers of certain scientists who, through professional one-sidedness, or through a total misapprehension of the spirit and methods of true Christianity, have made the Book a butt of ridicule, misrepresenting the Book and the Church just as (I am sorry to say it) the Church has stupidly misrepresented the scientists. The mention of the Book suggests forms of faith which do misrepresent Christianity—Churches and communities made up of low, ignorant, inconstant, inconsistent