

In the extension of its territory it is necessary that knowledge should be cantoned. Yet no man should be ignorant of the things which most concern his duty and his welfare. We cannot stand with both our feet on either sea or land, and be broadly wise : to stand firmly we must rest on both. By the study of material things and physical forces we cannot come to an adequate knowledge of God or of ourselves. We have always known this. The professional students of nature are impressing the fact upon us. They tell us that we have sought and found too much in the world of which we are a part. They change our demonstrations to inferences. They limit the declaration of the heavens and the revelation of the firmament. Sometimes in a reckless but sometimes in a reverent spirit they do. I do not speak of these things to complain of them, but to declare our independence. If these men do not go beyond the truth they do us no harm. They make it more needful that in some other way we come to the knowledge of ourselves and of Him who made us. They make it more certain that in some other way we can attain to this knowledge. What God does not say, through the heavens, he will say if we need to know it. The knowledge of material things by its increase makes it evident that we can know spiritual things which concern us more. The lessons of nature witness to the probability of a spiritual revelation which shall instruct us in that domain of our being where nature fails us. The rigid finger of the fossil points to the voice of a prophet. The enlarged knowledge of the ways of God should convince us that we can have the knowledge of God himself. To know more of the body should make us sure we can know more of the soul. Our Lord gave men the bread which nourished the flesh that they might look for the bread which nourishes the spirit.

This knowledge which we must have, for which our spirit cries out within us ; which the world of nature refuses to furnish, and which her priests tell us is not in her ; which the growth of less important learning makes almost certain, we find here in the Book. Its voice has lost nothing of its distinctness or authority ; it has gained in both since other voices have faltered and fallen under silence. More solitary than of old, the Bible is more grand than ever. More indispensable, it is more valuable. Still it answers our questions, and it will answer them. Deserted of the masters we come up to its serene and sacred heights to hear from the radiant cloud the words of eternal wisdom and everlasting life, "I will not leave you comfortless. Because I live, ye shall live also."

Besides this increase in the relative value of the Bible, there is an enlargement of its absolute and intrinsic worth.

1. It is of more worth because it is of worth to more men. The number of persons who read the Bible and take it for their guide is steadily increasing. Churches are rising up through our own land, and in all lands. Men who believe utterly in the Book are wandering through the waste places of the earth and among its populous countries with the open Bible in their hands. They read, and the people hear. Some become doers of the word, and thus become its witnesses and ministers. Every year enlarges the number of believers.

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2. The Bible is greater than ever because it is great to men more than ever. It is not merely that more men have received it as a book. It has gone into the lives of more men, and become a living force in them. Its law has more authority, its mercy more acceptance. It has gained the confirmation of the conscience and assumed the control of the life. It is in more character and will, and therefore has more influence, which is to be continued and increased. A telescope is not made larger by having other telescopes made ; but the telescope as an instrument and institution is enlarged. A Bible is no greater for the making of other Bibles, but the Bible as an institution and an element of control, is the larger. Making Bibles, and readers, and doers, makes the Book the more. The continual extension of the Church of God means the augmented power of the word, which is the magna charta of his kingdom.