

books is specially dull, and that those who deal in 'old' books have the dulllest time of all. Now I am just coming to my difficulty. Here is a publishing Society that confines its operations to one Book, and that Book the oldest of all; a Book with which the market is fairly glutted, hundreds of millions having been discharged into it; a Book, moreover, which we learn, on excellent authority, is now quite dead; and yet the Society flourishes! It is not running down, it is running up, and if it were the fashion to quote this sort of stock in the newspapers, I fancy you would need a stronger term than 'lively' to indicate the vitality of it.

"You see, friends, the dilemma I am in. I am forced to one of two conclusions—either we have in all this a veritable miracle of the nineteenth century, to which I am afraid our learned friend would hardly give his assent, or—I shrink from stating the alternative, but I must do it—the statement cannot be quite correct. The Bible cannot be quite dead after all. There must be some life in the old Book yet. Perhaps it is the same with the Bible as with some of those who wrote it, who spoke of themselves in a strange fashion like this: 'As dying, and behold we live; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; we are cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.' And it has occurred to me that possibly our learned friend may be somewhat like a certain well-known rustic, whom the poet Horace, in a passage exceedingly well known and often quoted, speaks of as standing upon the bank of a river and waiting till it should have flowed past and disappeared; not considering that as the river had flowed on from age to age before he was there, so from age to age it still would flow on after he had vanished from the scene. The streams of the Water of Life are flowing still, and they still will flow; there is no sign of any slackening of the tide, for what is true of the little brook is no less true but still more true, of this brimming river—

'Men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.'

The constant and ever increasing demand for the Bible, which is reflected in the wonderful history of this noble Society, is well worthy of consideration, quite apart from a publishing point of view; for what does it mean? It means that this old Book, which it is the work of this Society to circulate, is as young as ever—that it is a Book for the times as much as it ever was.

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"The fact is, all this talk about the Bible being out of date as a matter of science is so much nonsense. Let us have done with it, and let us ask how the Bible stands on its own ground. How does it accomplish the object which it sets before it? Is it out of date as a book on sin, on righteousness, on salvation? All other books that have been attempted on these subjects, except those which have drawn their inspiration directly or indirectly from the Scriptures, were either out of date at the time they were produced, or became out-dated in a very few years. The ethical and religious productions of those who made their researches and recorded the results of them apart from the Scriptures, where are they? Where, for example, are the moralists and philosophers of Greece and Rome? Their works, indeed, are on the shelves of every scholar in Christendom; but in what capacity? As authorities? Not at all; simply as monuments of genius and chapters of intellectual history. Who would ever think, when considering the question, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' of answering it by saying, 'By taking heed thereto according to Aristotle's "Nicomachian Ethics!"' And yet Aristotle's 'Nicomachian Ethics' is the very best book ever produced on the subject without aid from revelation.

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