

through his senses, lived in communion with the material universe, not less certainly, has he, through his religious endowment, lived in communion with a spiritual universe; and as much in one case as the other has marked progress been a work of time, with no more a leaning to absolute truth in religion than in science. Who would think of bringing together the classics of modern science, of claiming the books of Bacon, Newton, Laplace, Darwin, Helmholtz, and others, as canonical, and then insisting that they contained the infallible truth, that for a time men would find in them the last word to be said upon the great themes of science? No one, for science is recognized as being a growing body of knowledge. Not less surely, however, does every man live in a religious environment which, through experience and inference, furnishes the objective conditions essential to religious progress. In place of the dogma of Bible infallibility, then, we should put the truth of the universality of revelation—that men are no more cut off from access to God than they are from nature.

Again, as an infallible bible of science would most certainly be a great stumbling-block in the pathway of science, by directing the thoughts of men from the sources of knowledge, so has been and is an infallible bible of religion a mighty impediment to the progress of religion. The conception both of the need and of the existence of an infallible book based upon a psychology which is false through and through. It belittles and dries up the religious nature of man, by centering his thought upon written human productions as a finality,—productions which, however good, and though registering the high-water marks of gifted religious natures through centuries, are at best but sign-boards pointing us to the Father.

Would we behold God, we must look *at him*, not at the sign-boards. Helpful as a means, to view the Bible as an end in itself becomes positively an idolatry as the worship of a graven image; the misguided worshipper is led blindly by the letter, when he might be inspired, enlightened, and strengthened by communion with and guidance by the living God.*



BURNS.

TO-DAY be every fault forgiven
Of him in whom we joy;
We take, with thanks, the gold of heaven,
And leave the earth's alloy.
Be ours his music as of spring,
His sweetness as of flowers,
The songs the bard himself might sing
In holier ears than ours.

—Whittier.

* Reprinted from THE ARENA, Boston.