

define it. We *know*, with a heart-knowledge, that the Word of God is living and abiding, and we seek no more. We *know* that the life is there, because we feel it stirring in the soul when we read—stirring, not *suggestively*, as in the mental movement that noble human thoughts often cause within us, but *operatively*—manifesting its own inherent power within us, when we receive it with love; just as the grain of corn carries within itself its own inner life, and reveals that life when cast by the sower into the bosom of the receiving earth.

This we know, and it is enough. The heart tells us this, and God, who is greater than our hearts, confirms it with the testimony of the Spirit; and as we read we adore. This is the true *testimonium anime*, which, when once accepted and realized, not only bears with it, but is in itself, both conviction and life.

If these things are so, if this text on which we are meditating does verily set before us the true and essential nature of God's Holy Word—then, my brethren, what encouragement it ministers to us in our great and now yearly widening work. How it commends that work to us as one of the two most holy works which a Christian can take part on this side of the grave. Two works there are in relation to God's Word—the one, the mighty and responsible work of bringing that Word home to man's heart by preaching, and by the living voice; the other, the scarcely less responsible duty of circulating and spreading it. Yes, I will be bold to say, the scarcely less responsible duty of spreading it. For if the Word is what the text describes it, a living Word—if it involves in itself that personal element by which it speaks to each individual heart—if it contains that appealing and quickening power which I have endeavoured to set forth in this sermon—if the two hundred and fifty languages into which, to a great degree through the agency of this Society, it has now been translated, show that there is no language in which its blessed thought cannot flow as freely as in the language in which it was written—if the ready reception that the Holy Scriptures have met with in every land to which they have been borne, prove, by the very teaching of experience, that the Bible is *for* all, and speaks *to* all—if such be the Word of God, then who does not feel the force of the appeal to join in circulating that Word? Who that loves Christ can refuse the call to take part in bearing His message of Love to the countless thousands that are mutely longing for that message, and who, even among the deep shadows of their heathen darkness, are still unconsciously looking for and hoping for the day? Life, Life, eternal Life—this is the message of the Bible to every soul; a message which oftentimes has been realized when no teacher has been near, and when nought save the living page has ministered to the living spirit who has dwelt upon it. This is the Book which we are called upon to spread everywhere through a waiting world.

Seventy-and-two years ago this call came to the godly and devoted men who founded the Bible Society; and now, in these later days, the call is renewed to ourselves. Who can refuse to hear it?

Thank God, there are many among us who do hear it, and hear it gladly. There is many a cheering and encouraging sign. The blessings, manifold and marvellous, that have rested on this Society—the deeper interest that is everywhere showing itself in the elucidation of God's Word—the wondrous illustrations of biblical history that have been recently collected from the most ancient annals of the world—the firmer attitude of the defenders of the Truth—the patient care of translators and revisers—the multiplied labours of interpreters—the deep national determination that, be all else as it may, the Bible shall never be withdrawn from the hands of our children—all these things may well administer hope and encouragement. All may serve to bring home to us the cheering thought that the Holy Scriptures are still dear to the sons of the Reformation, and though doubt may be more widely spread, yet that the one Book by which England has advanced to the forefront of the nations of the earth is still loved and honoured by this kingdom and people.