

"THE KING OF BOOKS."

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"The statutes of the Lord are right."—*Psalm* xix, 8.

The following discourse was recently delivered at Lakeside, Ohio, and published in the *Religious Herald*, of Hartford, Conn :

Old books go out of date. When they were written they discussed questions which were being discussed ; they struck at wrongs which have long ago ceased, or advocated institutions which excite not our interest. Were they books of history, the facts have been gathered from the imperfect mass, better classified and more lucidly presented. Were they books of poetry, they were interlocked with wild mythologies which have gone up from the face of the earth like mists at sunrise. Were they books of morals, civilization will not sit at the feet of barbarism, neither do we want Sappho, Pythagoras or Tully to teach us morals. What do the masses of the people care now for the pathos of Simonides, or the sarcasm of Menander, or the wit of Aristophanes ? Even the old books we have left, with a few exceptions, have but very little effect upon our times. Books are human ; they have a time to be born, they are fondled, they grow in strength, they have a middle life of usefulness, then comes old age, they totter and they die. Many of the national libraries are merely the cemeteries of dead books. Some of them lived flagitious lives and died deaths of ignominy. Some were virtuous and accomplished a glorious mission. Some went into the ashes through inquisitorial fires. Some found their funeral pile in sacked and plundered cities. Some were neglected and died as foundlings at the door of science. Some expired in the author's study, others in the publisher's hands. Ever and anon there comes into your possession an old book, its author forgotten and its usefulness gone, and with leathern lips it seems to say : " I wish I were dead." Monuments have been raised over poets and philanthropists. Would that some tall shaft might be erected in honour of the world's buried books ! The world's authors would make pilgrimage thereto, and poetry, and literature, and science, and religion would consecrate it with their tears.

Not so with one old book. It started in the world's infancy. It grew under theocracy and monarchy. It withstood storms of fire. It grew under prophet's mantle and under the fisherman's coat of the apostles ; in Rome, and Ephesus, and Jerusalem, and Patmos. Tyranny issued edicts against it, and infidelity put out the tongue, and Mahomedanism from its mosques hurled its anathemas, but the old Bible still lived. It crossed the British Channel and was greeted by Wycliffe and James I. It crossed the Atlantic and struck Plymouth Rock, until like that of Horeb it gushed with blessedness. Churches and asylums have gathered all along its way, ringing their bells and stretching out their hands of blessing ; and every Sabbath there are ten thousand heralds of the cross with their hands on this open, grand, free, old English Bible. But it will not have accomplished its mission until it has climbed the icy mountains of Greenland ; until it has gone over the granite cliffs of China ; until it has thrown its glow amid the Australian mines ; until it has scattered its gems among the diamond districts of Brazil ; and all thrones shall be gathered into one throne, and all crowns, by the fires of revolution, shall be melted into one crown, and this book shall at the very gate of heaven have waved in the ransomed empires. Not until then will this glorious Bible have accomplished its mission.

In carrying out, then, the idea of my text—" The statutes of the Lord are right"—I shall show you that the Bible is right in authentication ; that it is right in style ; that it is right in doctrine ; that it is right in its effects.

I. Can you doubt the authenticity of the Scriptures ? There is not so much evidence that Walter Scott wrote " The Lady of the Lake ;" not so much evidence that Shakspeare wrote " Hamlet ;" not so much evidence that John