

are the laws of Solon and Lycurgus beside the Decalogue and the laws of Moses—a lawgiver, says Milman, “who has exercised a more extensive and permanent influence over the destinies of mankind than any other individual in the history of the world.” Where are there more true and touching narratives, or more faithful and more thrilling biographies? Where in the world’s literature do there stand out such majestic characters as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, John, Paul? What collection of aphorisms excels, in range, point, and truth, and application to every phase of human life, the Proverbs of Solomon? How low and shallow do the selected hymns of Egypt and Chaldea appear beside the Psalms of David—lyrics that the church still sings with delight, and will always sing? The thunder-storms of Virgil and of Homer are far inferior to that of David (Psalm xviii), both in graphic power and in sublimity of use. “Indeed,” says Professor Francis Bowen, “I know not anything in all Greek, Latin, or English Poetry, that matches the sublimity and grandeur, the magnificent sweep of this description of the providence of God as manifested in the phenomena of nature.” In like manner the passionless Alexander von Humboldt could speak of “the splendour of lyric poetry in the Psalms of David,” and express his astonishment to find a single psalm (the 104th) representing “with a few bold touches the heavens and the earth—the whole image of the Cosmos.” So fastidious a critic as Goethe could pronounce the Book of Ruth “the loveliest specimen of epic and idyllic poetry we possess;” and Carlyle, the deist, could find in the Book of Job “one of the grandest things ever written with the pen,” adding, “there is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.” It is but the literal truth to say that some single paragraphs and even sentences in that volume contain more breadth and depth of moral meaning than the whole Offices of Cicero. Viewed merely on its intellectual side, what ethical discourse in all classic literature can be named in the presence of the Sermon on the Mount? What exhibitions of genius—to speak it reverently—compare with those parables of Christ, ready for every occasion, and sometimes bursting forth in whole harvests at once? what rejoinders approach the consummate wisdom and skill with which He enlightened the inquirer, met the caviller, or silenced the foe? And in their original form, how matchless often in their vividness, terseness, brilliancy and grace. “Let me,” wrote John Ruskin to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, “let me tell your readers who care to know, in the fewest possible words, what the Bible is. It is the grandest group of writings existent in the rational world,” put into two of the grandest languages of the rational world, “translated with beauty and felicity into every language of the Christian world, and the guide, since so translated, of all the arts and acts of that world which have been noble, fortunate, and happy.” And it was no less a man than the gallant patriot, Garibaldi, who wrote to the Earl of Shaftesbury, while struggling for the deliverance of Italy from the Austrian and Papal power, “The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible, which will bring us the reality of freedom.”

• Holding thus in our hands a volume of such transcendent merit and such potent influence, so centrally related to history, and literature, morals, and civilization, how can we hesitate for one moment to place it, in a course of education, on the throne which it has itself acquired? Any doubt or hesitation might be put to shame by a visit to the Mohammedan University at Cairo with its ten thousand students, having for their chief study that Koran of which the same John Ruskin has written, “I have read three or four pages of the translation of the Koran, and never want to read any more,” and which Carlyle has characterized as “insupportable stupidity;” or to the Hindoo College at Benares, with its learned lectures on the Sacred Books, of which their ardent editor Max Müller, asserts that their “chief, in many cases the only, interest is historical.” Or, to cite an example that no man can affect to despise, we might visit a German gymnasium, to find the study of Christi-