

Pastor and People.

THE BIBLE FOR THE WORLD.

Before leaving Scotland for the Antipodes the Rev. Dr. A. N. Somerville addressed 1 between 4000 and 6000 persons in Kibble Palace, the largest public hall in Glasgow, and met with a most enthusiastic reception.

The Rev. gentleman spoke in substance as follows:—

What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. It is quite inadequate to say that the Bible is the most wonderful book in the world. The volume is from beginning to end the word of God, the only infallible authority on earth. It speaks nothing but truth. It is the sole depository on earth of saving truth. It is destined to accomplish effects upon the earth greater far than all fleets and armies, arts, science, or merely human literature shall ever accomplish. The Bible is the divine mould by which humanity is to be recast, and is to take upon it the features and lineaments of Paradise. When it is desired that great deeds or men have their memory perpetuated, it is customary to erect monuments, statues, arches, pyramids. The Bible is the monument the great God has erected to His own renown in the midst of the earth. On it He has inscribed the record of creation, of providence and redemption. Unlike the pile in the plain of Shinar, the tower of Babel,—of confusion,—the Bible is a monument radiant with the glory of God. Around it confusion ceases, divine order begins; the scattered tribes of earth are yet to rally round it to learn the same language, to sing the same hymn—the song of the Lamb.

THE BIBLE AS A REVELATION FROM GOD.

There is something mysterious about the Scriptures. There lies the Book—noiseless, as if it had no force at all. But this wonderful Book not only influences earth, but powerfully influences the agencies of heaven. During the time there was no written Scripture, and the Bible was preparing, God was pleased to communicate with man in a variety of ways,—by visions, voices from heaven, by the pillar of fire, by the glory between the cherubim, by Urim and Thummim, by inspired messengers, by miracles, and very specially by the ministry of angels. Now it is a remarkable thing that all these methods of communication on the part of God with man have ceased. I believe there is no authentic proof that there has been a single angel seen on earth during the last 1760 years. I might almost say the same of miracles. The infidel taunts us, and says, "Where are your inspired teachers, your miracles, and angels now? If it had been true that there once were miracles and angels, why are there no miracles to-day?" We reply, the Bible explains it; it is the Bible that has closed the gate and shut out all these heavenly agencies, so that we have them no more. Now that the canon of Scripture is closed, all these instrumentalities are withdrawn. Perhaps you say, We are not, then, so well off now. But indeed all the forces and instrumentalities I have described are to be found in the Scripture itself, and there is more force in that book than in all the previous instrumentalities God employed.

ATTACKS ON THE BIBLE.

The Bible in our day and land is exposed to many adversaries. Some say it is human, legendary, behind the age, inaccurate; others overlay it with tawdry, gewgaws; and the Romish apostasy has declared the Pope himself infallible, putting the word of man on a level with the word of God. The Rationalist monster of Germany and Holland has swum across the North Sea, displaying his jaws, and drawing down into the depths some of the higher critics among ourselves. The monster of Ritualism is more glossy and smooth in his skin, and makes way with the fashionable and refined; while the old wolf of Pagan Rome has been uttering his howl, and making havoc with some of high rank and position. Against these terrible foes the Bible has to stand; and it will hold its own, and all the adversaries that may come against it shall not be able to injure that Scripture of God. It is true many may lose their foothold; and be swept away—suffer serious damage and injury; but for the Bible itself there is no fear. The Bible has raised Britain to the foremost rank among the nations, and was to the day when we shall lose our faith in it! But, however it may be with us, there is no fear for the Bible itself. Like the lighthouse, its light may be obscured by the fogs of error; the wild surges of human passion may sweep over its shaft; the whirlwind of unbelief may rave around it; but it will remain unshaken, its foundation not removed, not a stone of its fabric displaced, and its light, after every obscuration, will again stream forth to illumine a dark and tempestuous world.

No book has been subject to such criticism as the Bible. If criticism could have demolished the Bible, it would have been annihilated long ere now. But grand old Moses will continue as upright as ever in the midst of the changing ocean; and as for the Gospel of John, the simplest, deepest, richest, most majestic, most wonderful composition in the world, you may as well think of annihilating the angel Gabriel himself as of destroying that Gospel.

VITALITY OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible is possessed of an extraordinary vitality, which every now and then startles the world. In the last and greatest Roman persecution, the Christians were required to give up their books, and copies of the Scripture became scarce. But those seemingly dying scriptures suddenly sprang as out of the sepulchre, and in course of two years after the persecution, the whole Roman Empire declared itself Christian. In 1617, these same Scriptures a second time sprang from their sepulchre; the half of Europe yielded professedly to the gospel, and the face of the world was changed. And now the Scriptures have been diffused in our day until they are read in nearly 200 different languages, and the way is being prepared for a movement which I have no doubt will astonish mankind. It only needs

a spark from the Holy Ghost to kindle a blaze over all the nations now in darkness. Though Oriental in their origin, the Scriptures are for all men. The majority of men are Orientals, and they are preparing to receive their own Book.

(Dr. Somerville, as a specimen of the Bible, invited his audience to step with him into one chamber of the great gallery of Divine masterpieces,—the room over which was inscribed the word 'Christ,'—and described, in glowing words, the features and character of the Son of God, as portrayed in the pictures of Him drawn by inspired writers, and then proceeded)—These are specimens of some of those divine masterpieces God has clothed the walls of this central chamber with. Do you think the Lord God Almighty will allow such masterpieces to be mutilated? (As another specimen, Dr. Somerville imagined the scene as the mother and grandmother of Timothy taught their little boy the Hebrew Scriptures; and then pictured Paul in his prison at Rome, and quoted his words to Timothy,—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.") Of what book under the sun are you able to say, There is a book that will do for the instruction of the little boy that cannot read, and of him who was the most experienced minister, except Paul himself, then in the world? Ah, sirs, let us not lose our faith in the Bible. 'Heaven and earth,' our Master has said, 'shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.'

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

There are some people that speak of inspiration as if it were nothing more than what in rhetorical language is ascribed to Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, and other remarkable geniuses. I think it not worth while to refute that idea. But there are others inclined to say that inspiration is just a higher degree of spiritual illumination. Now this is incorrectly put. Spiritual illumination is one thing, and the inspiration of Scripture is quite another. It is not difficult to show some points in which they differ. Illumination is a grace common to all the Church of God; inspiration was a gift limited to a few. Spiritual illumination is what continues through all ages, and will continue through all ages to the end; whereas inspiration has long since ceased. Illumination can greatly be increased, and is very different in degree in different persons; inspiration is incapable of increase; there is no difference as to degree in inspiration. There is not one book in Scripture which is one whit more inspired than any other. Spiritual illumination is always possessed by men of God; inspiration, we find, though commonly exercised by holy men, was certainly not restricted to them, for you have the wicked King Saul and Balaam speaking through inspiration. Again, illumination is to be found in connection with sinfulness in man, and in proportion to the sinfulness in man the illumination is impaired; inspiration is not impaired by the sinfulness of man,—it comes to us, if God has given it, in perfect condition.

But there are persons who agree with me in this, but they say, Inspiration is tantamount to revelation; that is to say, that God communicated certain principles, doctrines, instructions to men,—divinely communicated these instructions. But inspiration ends there; men, having received divine communications from above in the way of truth revealed to them, were then left to put down in writing, in their own way, every man as he considered best. So they say, the ideas are of God, but the writings themselves are certainly human. Now we not only maintain that there was a revelation of truth to the soul, but we maintain the divine inspiration of the record; not merely that the ideas were communicated to the man, but that the words also are of God. What is the reason there are persons so anxious to draw a distinction between revelation in the mind and the record? They think that in this way only can we account for what they are pleased to call trivialities, redundancies, feeble utterances, and unintentional inaccuracies of Scripture. With regard to these I have just to say that, having been a student of these oracles of God for fifty years, I have never yet discovered anything trivial or inaccurate. There may be something that proves men's carelessness in the transcription, but we are prepared to affirm that the very words themselves were inspired. With regard to trivialities, as Robert Haldane said, people who object to the mention of Paul's cloak and Timothy's wine, might as well object to the mushroom and the worm in nature, because these creatures are trivial.

We cannot admit that inspired men put the revelation of God into their own words, and that for five reasons:—First, because we could not be assured but that human error mingled with divine truth. Second, because we could not be sure that, though God gave all the truths to the men, they gave all the truths to us. Third, because we could have no guarantee for the accuracy of Scripture. Fourth, because, if allowed to put down in their own language these mysterious things God communicated to them, which they often themselves did not comprehend, they would be very likely to be obscure, and we could have no guarantee for the adaptability, the suitability of the language. Fifth, if you tell us so much is divine and so much is human and imperfect, you leave us without a guarantee for the authority of Scripture.

When we go to the Bible and ask what it says about itself, we do not find it speaking about ideas. It is, 'Thus saith the Lord'; 'The Spirit spake by my tongue'; 'The words which the Holy Ghost teacheth'; 'The voice of the Lord.' In order to see the importance of verbal accuracy, consider what a difference it would make if the word 'ye,' in the sentence, 'Ye must be born again,' had been rendered 'we,' and what a difference if the word 'other' had been dropped from the sentence, 'Wrest, as they do the other Scriptures.'

How, then, do we explain inspiration? It is not possible fully to explain it; it is enough to be sure of the fact. But a few remarks may be made. You are not to suppose that the Holy Spirit took possession of the lips or the fingers of inspired

men. No; the instrumentality God made use of was the whole man, the man in his whole nature and constitution and susceptibility,—in his history, his peculiar characteristics and talents, the circumstances of the time in which he lived, in his imagination, memory, culture, everything you can suppose connected with the man. A musician may be able to play equally well on many instruments; he may play the same melody upon each, and yet, through the different configuration of the instruments, the sound coming through each will be very different. In the same way, though the words of the Bible are intensely human, they are also divine.

DUTY OF CIRCULATING THE BIBLE.

What, then, is our duty with respect to the diffusion of the Scriptures? If the Bible is a book for all nations, it is our bounden duty to distribute it through the world, in accordance with the command of our Lord to His disciples before His ascension. All I shall ever be able to tell, like all I have told hitherto, I have to take out of the Scripture, and if I were to tell you anything as binding on their consciences, not in the Scripture, I would deserve to be re-proved. It is our part to unite together, as members of all churches, to diffuse these glorious oracles of God throughout the earth. We are to have it in our own souls, like seed germinating there; and we should be like plants with winged seeds, spreading till a whole country is filled with the plant. So let it be with us, from city to city, continent to continent, from one quarter of the globe to all the rest, the glorious word of the Lord shall be spread abroad.

One of the grandest passages in old classic poetry is the one in which a representation is given of the manner in which the tidings of the fall of a distant city were conveyed to another with which it was at war. This was done by lighting signal fires on successive eminences; and the poet describes how on the instant flame rose in the evening sky, and the glad news passed from hill to hill, from isle to isle, from promontory to promontory, from cliff to tower and mountain steep, till the shouts that arose in the streets of Argos announced that their king was victorious, and that great Troy had fallen at last. The Lord Jesus Christ expects that we shall keep burning our signal fires; that we shall be like a succession of watchers stretching from Calvary, the scene of His triumph, to the end of the earth. He would have us, in this night of the world's darkness, trim our beacon fires, and shine forth in the evening, declaring the glorious conquest once achieved on Calvary, till the glad sound reaches south to Africa, north to Siberia and Lapland, west over the wide sea and down through all the Americas from Greenland's icy mountains to Fuegian shores, and eastward till the shout shall burst from the lips of emancipated India, and the voice of jubilee be caught up by the millions of China, and the sound shall ring through every isle of the great Pacific, till re-echoed by Norfolk Island and Australia with all her gold.

THE BIBLE, A HOUSE OF MANY MANSIONS.

I began by comparing the Bible to a tower. We may also compare these Holy Scriptures to a majestic temple, which took seventeen centuries to build. Its architect and maker is God, and everywhere about it you perceive the impress of the same hand that you can discern in the beautiful works of creation. This temple has sixty-six capacious though unequally sized chambers. Every one of its 81,178 verses is a stone, a beam, more excellent than was ever seen from the quarries or woods of Lebanon,—more excellent than was ever built by Solomon or Zerubbabel. This beautiful temple is the home of the whole family of God. Here they are nourished, tended, instructed, prepared for immortality. And not only is the Church of God found within this sacred enclosure, but God Himself is ever to be found there. When Jesus was going to heaven, He said, In my Father's house are many mansions—mansions in heaven and for eternity. But the Bible is the house of many mansions God has erected on the earth, and within which He would have all His people find their abode. Let us avail ourselves of the King's permission, and step inside. We approach through a beautiful garden, the garden of Eden. The first part of the building to which we come is the most ancient and venerable. It is made up of five chambers; these are the chambers of Law and Justice,—the five books of Moses. These are the vestibule to the rest. Passing from them, we come to a suite of twelve apartments,—the library of the building, containing the historical record, the Church's archives for a thousand years, from Joshua to Esther. Then we come to the saints' exercising ground, the gymnasium of the building,—the Book of Job. Then all at once find ourselves in the orchestra of the building,—the Psalms,—where dwell all the sons and daughters of song, with cymbals and harps. Next we come to the chamber of commerce,—the Book of Proverbs; and close to that, a small but important chamber, the penitentiary for defaulters,—the Book of Ecclesiastes. After that, there is a beautiful parlour, called sympathy with mourners,—the Lamentations. And here and there about this part of the building are pretty conservatories of Oriental flowers,—The Book of Ruth and the Song of Solomon. Then we have fifteen chambers of peculiar splendor. You enter, you are surprised by the august magnificence that meets your eye; these are the halls of ancient prophecy. Now we come to the more modern part of the building. We enter, and we find ourselves passing through four chambers of the most spotless marble; and when we look on the walls, we see four full-length portraits of the Lord of the building Himself, drawn by the Holy Spirit's imitable hand; these are the four Evangelists. On leaving them, you hear extraordinary sounds as of machinery in motion,—wheels, cranks, and pinions,—and everything exhibiting extraordinary activity. You look for the motive power, but it is out of sight—it is above. This is the work-room of the building,—the Book of Acts. Passing thence, we come to a very rich series of apartments, twenty-one in number, and we see no less than fourteen have inscribed over them one honorable name, the name of the Apostle of the Gentiles; others have the names of

John, James, and Jude. These are the halls of the Apostolic Epistles, in which the Lord has been pleased to lay up the very richest treasures of His house. And now we come to the extremity of the building, and we enter a mysterious gallery, with lights and shadows strangely blended, and sights of the most extraordinary description are presented to our eye. We are in the mysterious gallery of the Apocalypse. There we see the future of Christ's Church on earth, till Christ Himself, the Bridegroom, come. Step out now on the balcony and look abroad. There is a lovely meadow, with a pure river of the water of life, and beside it the tree of life, with its twelve manner of fruits, and its leaves for the healing of the nations. And high above us, crowning the everlasting hills, is a city all in gold, bathed in light and quivering in glory,—the New Jerusalem, whose foundations are of precious stones, its walls of Jasper and its gates of pearl, and that needs no sun nor moon, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

CONCLUSION.

Oh, sir and Christian friends, let me, as my last utterance, I suppose, in this place, invite you all to enter this beautiful house. See that you are familiar with every chamber in it, and let it be indeed your very home. But oh, take care of one thing! Be sure, ere you cross the portal, to ask that Angel and Loving One to enter with you, who stands as porter at the gate. See you take Him in with you, that He may show you all over the building and explain everything in every chamber to you. Look up and say to Him, 'Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.' And remember, you and your dear little children,—whom I beseech you to take in either hand and lead within,—while you make it your home,—remember it is to be a home for all poor, perishing souls throughout all Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the isles of the sea. Oh, seek that they along with you may within that house have their habitation, and then along with you be prepared in this house of many mansions on earth to have your abode in the house of many mansions in heaven, where our great Lord Jesus at this moment is, and who this evening is looking down in love upon us all. Amen.

DR. A. A. BONAR.—As Dr. Somerville's oldest friend here—he and I have known each other for fifty years—I move a vote of thanks. But the acceptance of this proposal involves three resolutions on your part. You are to study these sixty-six books of the Bible; you are to do your utmost to extend the circulation of these books to every nation under heaven; and third if you would truly thank our beloved brother and send a thrill of joy through his heart, each one of you must resolve to pray for him, and that that Book of God may shed its light through the whole world. Rev. Mr. Niven moved thanks to the chairman, and the Rev. Mr. M'Dermid pronounced the benediction.

Inaccurate Quotations.

In seeking to search the Scriptures, as our Lord commanded, it is of prime importance that we become familiar enough with them at least to remember the exact words they employ. Inaccuracy in the citation of inspired proof-texts is as needless as it is unfortunate. For an instructor of children this fault is deserving of singular censure. "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Two rules are all that any one will find essential to put into service.

1. Be sure you are quoting that which is in the Scriptures. The Governor of Tennessee had no right to introduce into his message the line "Now is the winter of our discontent," as the utterance of "the prophet." It is not in the bible that you will meet the sentimental figure of Lawrence Sterne, "The Lord tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

2. Be sure you are quoting the passage as it is in the Scriptures. No man would ever find in the Bible the absurd jumble he sometimes opens his prayer with: "O Lord, we would put our hand on our mouth and our mouth in the dust, and cry out, unclean, unclean! God be merciful to us sinners!" Children sit with wonderment under a confusion of acts and images so incongruous and impossible. Four texts are spoiled to construct this nonsense. It was the afflicted Job that laid his hand on his mouth. It was the yoke-bearing youth in Lamentations that put his (not Job's) mouth in the dust. It was the leper in Leviticus that was directed to wear a covering on his upper lip (not his hand on his mouth) and cry, unclean. It was the publican (with hands beating his breast, and out of the dust altogether, in the temple) who said, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' This is no way to quote God's language when speaking to Him.

Further illustrations, almost without number, crowd upon our remembrance as we linger upon either of these directions. In one of Horace Walpole's letters occurs this paragraph; he is praising a certain childless couple, and the sweet life they were living away one side on a small estate; he says: "They may comfort themselves with having no children, when they recollect that the earliest-born of men committed murder with the jaw-bone of an ass—a deadly weapon, I am sure." William Hazlitt, in like carelessness, says it was "the Samaritan" who prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Leigh Hunt declares that the poet Shelley, of whom he was writing a defence, "was a student of the book of Job, but for his Christianity he went to the Gospel of St. James." Thackeray states that it was Eli for whom his mother made some "little shirt" every year, instead of Samuel, for whom Hannah made a coat. And in the earlier editions of the story of Paul Dombey, Charles Dickens sets one of the stupid boys in that school where the little chap learned the rudiments at repeating a chapter "from the first epistle of Paul to the Ephesians," as his punishment for coughing out of season at the table.

The New York Tribune gotterribly mixed lately over the history of Michal, the daughter of Saul, when talking about that horrible picture in the Exposition, "Rizpah protecting the bodies of her sons." The Satur-

day Review asserts that the poet Cowper was converted by a verse in the "third epistle of Paul to the Romans." And this paragraph we have cut straight out of the New York Herald not five months ago: "There is a story in the Bible which tells us that a certain Philip was recommended to bathe in the Jordan River, and that the great man objected to that obscure lavatory, because of the argument that the Euphrates was the nobler torrent of the two." This is one of the bright authorities which insist that no minister of the Gospel must assume to speak of science, since preachers are not instructed thoroughly in the details and the vocabulary.

Colonel Benton, once in the United States Senate, spoke feelingly of the man out of whom our Savior cast seven devils at one time. And Waddy Thompson, formerly our minister in Mexico, when describing the hospital he visited in that forlorn country, called "The Hospital of Lazarus," said, "the inmates would have rivalled in sores and rags the brother of Martha and Mary."

Lord Konyon on the judicial bench charged a jury thus: "Finally, gentlemen, I would call your attention to the example of the Roman Emperor, Julian, who was so distinguished for every Christian virtue, that the Scripture called him 'Julian, the apostle.'"—Chas. S. Robinson, D.D.

Life Lessons.

Who loses self in brotherhood  
Forth-giving ever gathers good;  
And who for truth or right would die,  
In falling gains the victory.

The spirit wrought to noble aim,  
The thought that sets the mind aflame,  
The faith that wins in deadly fight—  
Forgetting self, have greatest might.

So wisdom centres at the heart,  
Like subtle sense that every part  
Moves unperceived in perfect health;  
And knowledge thrives in larger wealth.

But chiefest to the soul perplex—  
By doubt or wayward evil vex—  
Oppressed with woes or worn with strife,  
This whisper opens the gates of life.

Not what thou art, but what He is  
In whom thou livest, makes thy bliss;  
Count self and all its searchings loss  
Before this wisdom of the Cross.

Random Readings.

THERE is no outward sign of courtesy that does not rest on a deep moral foundation.—Goethe.

It is vain to think we can take any delight in being with Christ hereafter, if we care not how little we are in his company here.

The revelations that God has made of his will are not so much for knowledge as they are for practice. He that knows and does not has many stripes awaiting him.

To those who delight in God he is a sure defense. But unless our hearts are right with Him we cannot delight in Him, and so cannot enjoy His protection against our spiritual enemies.

The soul is like the earth, sometimes green and springing, at other times dry and withering; both powerless in themselves, and neither of them fruitful without a proper cultivation on the part of man.

All the glory of God is in focus upon each believing soul. The wisdom, the power, the love, the grace of our Father are occupied with our concerns, that often seem so insignificant. "Nathanael, whilst thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee."—Zyng.

The commandments were not promulgated by a tyrant. The Lord God who brought Israel out of Egypt was behind them. These words written by God's finger on stone amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, were wreathed with love, and were vocal with good will.—Fulton.

A mother once asked a clergyman when she should begin the education of her child, which she told him was four years old. "Madam," was the reply, "you have lost three years already. From the very first smile that gleams over the infant's cheek, your opportunity begins."

People who study their troubles all the time will always be troubled. Looking at the miseries, they grow worse and worse, and in proportion as pains are noticed and nursed will they increase and deepen. If we would have peace, we must look away from ourselves to Jesus, and casting all our care upon him, we feel the sting of our misfortunes to disappear.

God does not call us always to labor as man counts labor. He sets us often in solitary and hard ways, laying upon us only burdens of suffering and utter weakness and helplessness. And then, when life has gone and the world says: This man lived in vain, God reckons up the account, and over against the loss and emptiness and waste of life he writes: Well done, good and faithful servant.

If we could only hold ourselves, restrain ourselves, and give ourselves, in thought as in deed, unto God, we should change the complexion of the generation. There lies the root of the whole evil; there is the most discouraging problem in modern religious life—this question of purity. And, if we have kept ourselves pure in heart and deed, we shall have done a great deal towards attaining to the kingdom of God.

It is a notable fact that it was a Sabbath's sun that first met the gaze of man when he awoke to consciousness. Created the sixth day, on the seventh he passed into the unfolding glories of a divine Sabbath. The fact is a beautiful foreshadowing of the truth that cheers the heart of the believer who closes his eyes to a life of care, knowing that he shall awake in God's likeness to behold the glories of a Sabbath that hath no setting sun.—Fulton.

No man lives in right scriptural culture who does not enjoy the peace of the Sabbath. He may have a tranquil life, one free from noise and strife; but that repose of soul which is the highest form of rest will be wanting till he has entered into the experience that comes with a right observance of the one day in seven. A war on the Sabbath is a war on the means for the most ennobling of all our influences, and he who makes it and carries it on is an enemy to our happiness.