

HOW "THE WORD" SPEAKS TO THE ORIENTAL HEART.

By the Rev. J. L. Phillips, M.D., in the "Sunday School Times."

One of the men who was a kind and helpful friend to me in my student days in America was Chancellor Matthews, of the New York University. While attending lectures at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, I used to conduct the Sunday morning services for a small band of disciples who worshipped in a modest little edifice near Broadway, up town; And how it came about I don't know, but Dr. Matthews was often with us. Sometimes he took the service; but whether he did or not, he never came without doing us good, and I am indebted to him for not a few valuable hints relating to Christian work.

One point to which my venerable friend used to call my attention was this: the wonderful way that the Bible appealed to men's hearts; and he showed me how strong heads or well-trained brains are reached through the heart. "Study all you like, my young brother, and the more the better, but when you preach speak to the heart; for God's word was sent to move and mould and manage the human heart." These were not his exact words, but after more than twenty years I've reproduced his thoughts as best I could. Whoever has read the good chancellor's book, "The Bible and Men of Learning," knows how well he has proved the power of the Holy Scriptures over the human intellect, as well as over the heart.

An old English writer has spoken of the self-evidencing power of the Bible. I have been reminded of this many times since I came to India. I have watched the effect of Bible lessons upon thoughtful and scholarly men. Several years ago I had a Hindu pundit who illustrates this. He was a fine Sanscrit scholar and a thorough disciplinarian; hence he was much esteemed by his pupils. We used to open school with responsive readings from the Psalms and the book of Proverbs, I reading a verse and the pundits and pupils together reading the next, and so on. It was truly affecting to see how these words spoke to this man's heart. I have seen him powerfully moved at times by passages we were reading. He would stop in the middle of a verse, his quick eye taking it all in, tears would fill his eyes, he would heave a deep sigh, then make a peculiar sound with his lips, such as natives of India make when strongly oppressed or astonished. As he stood near me when we read the Scripture lessons, I often noticed this effect that God's word was producing upon this man's heart. Several times after the lesson was done and prayer offered up, he spoke to some of us about certain passages, saying so heartily, "Very wonderful, very wonderful words, these." He is still a Brahmin outwardly, but I believe the living word is doing its work in his heart.

Only yesterday there came another illustration of how the word speaks to the heart. A Mohammedan friend, a fine Persian scholar, chanced to call while I was teaching one of my Old Testament classes. He listened with profound attention, was pleased to find the young men so interested in their work, spoke a cheering word or two about the triumphs of Christianity in India; but what interested me most was the quiet and sure way that the truth of God's holy word was appealing to the man's heart. The lesson, the references, the proof-texts, the illustrations—all were speaking to him. Suddenly starting from his reverie, he asked, "Do you know that Bible by heart?" "No; but I like to carry all I can of it in my heart."

As never before, the blessed Bible is speaking to the heart of India. As English education increases, the demand for the English Scriptures increases. The British and Foreign Bible Society is doing much for India, and its work grows apace. The whole Bible can be bought now for four annas (ten cents), and the New Testament for an anna. This Christian literature—the Bible and books about the Bible—is a mighty lever lifting society out of the dark-