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The Bible at Work.

BY THE REV. W. FISHER, M.A.

GOD made man "of one blood," an entity, and, in all its myriad multiplication, an unchanging entity. In all the great varieties of tribal and national life, and in all the endless varieties of individual character, it is an identical entity, and there are ever the same elements and contents whatever the manifestation or development. Hence the one Son of God—the Son of Man—as Bread of Life for all and for each. Hence the one Book of God as the Word of Life for all and for each. As He is complete, so we hold this complete. There is one message, for the "one blood," from the one God. With all their actual and seeming contrasts, we anticipate no special Gospel or Epistle to meet the modern needs of India or China.



Nothing so signally discovers and demonstrates the scientific truth of this as the Bible at work. To-day it is the busiest book in the world. No book travels so much or so far. In the months of April and May the Bible Society sent from its London warehouse 584 cases weighing 55½ tons; in June and July 389 cases weighing 47¾ tons; in August and September 460 cases weighing 51 tons—in six months 1,436 cases weighing 154¼ tons. No book to-day gets so much among its friends, true and false, nor among its enemies, religious and racial. It is abroad to-day throughout Christendom, and streams freely amongst Jewish, Mohammedan, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucianist peoples. Its field is, literally, the world.



No book, therefore, so gives itself to the possibilities of failure, nor, if it has any, exposes its faults so openly to those best able and willing to make the most of them. If its general circulation be dangerous or evil, one hundred years' experience must provide evidences without number and without contradiction. Yet with no external argument or living defender, its most conspicuous fortunes only demonstrate its Divine origin. On all hands in manifold ways it is declared to be a word that is quick and powerful, with voice and energy its own. "While you read the Gospel," said a high-class and educated Mohammedan in the depot at Casablanca, "you seem to feel that a living Person is in it, drawing you to Him." "Now we are afraid of you," said a heathen chief on the Gold Coast. "Before, when you came with the Bible in a foreign tongue, we feared you not. The axe was good, but the handle was not strong enough. . . . Now your handle is made of the country's wood, and our sacred trees will be cut down and our groves destroyed." "He Who wrote that book," said a Chinese Mandarin, "made me."



While in China, Lord William Cecil entered into conversation with an educated Chinaman whom he found reading the Gospel of St. John. He was impressed with the Person of Christ—His lonely life and death—and said

that He must have been Divine, "as no one can do good and stand alone." There is something of a scientific sort in this universal appeal and universal response—something that argues alike a common basis in the book and in the race. But it has greater works than these. It works those works in France. "My husband used to drink heavily; now he does not drink at all. This is what your book has done."—"Instead of going to the tavern," said another, "he stays at home. Our house was a hell; now it is a heaven."—"Oh, sir, I bought a Bible from a man like you, and since my husband has been reading it he finds from his Bible the strength not to drink. He is a different man. He used to be so bad; now he has become good."—"Since I began to read that book, I have no longer any thought of committing suicide."—"This book has been my resurrection. I was under the weight of my sins. For years I dared not go to confession. But to-day I bless you for selling me this book, through which I have found the forgiveness of my sins. God bless you for the good I have received through you. Now I have found my Saviour and my salvation."—"I do not put my trust in man," said a peasant woman, "nor even in religion. I go to the Gospel where God Himself speaks to me. I am poor, but I would not exchange my lot with that of a millionaire, for I have a treasure which cannot be taken from me. I have joy and peace; I rest on my God and Saviour, and that is enough for me."



It works the same in Hungary. "In B. there was a drunkard living deep in sin. He met me in an inn, and when I rebuked him for his life he bought a Bible. This he took home with him, but paid it no attention. After a while he noticed that his wife was reading the Bible, and that the tears were coursing their way down her careworn face. This touched him to the quick, and he also began to read with his wife, and became a different man. The former drunkard now declares that he cannot live without God's Word." It does the same in Spain. In the midst of a turbulent crowd a Spaniard bore this testimony: "Don't you see that I am not the same? Don't you know what I was? Don't you remember how I blasphemed? Now I don't blaspheme, but I worship God, and all this is due to the Bible."



It has the same power in Siberia. "I knew an officer, a regular drunkard, who cared for nothing but drink and pleasure. One day the Major of his company—a good man—made this officer a present of the Four Gospels. Fortunately the officer read it, and then began to study it. Not long after his comrades saw a vast change in him. He gave up drink and became a total abstainer, and remained so until his death. The copy of the Gospels given to him he always carried about with him, and that book was the salvation of the man." It has the same power even among heathens. A Japanese colporteur did several months' hard work in the Luchu Islands. Later a missionary living in the islands wrote: "I have just spent one of the most wonderful weeks of my life baptizing 130 people who were prepared for baptism largely as a result of Suganuma's faithful work amongst them." These incidents, taken from the Bible Society's Report, illustrate how emphatically the Bible is at work in the world. And in this column we hope to bring before our readers many more proofs of its Divine power.