

has gone ahead of the missionary. I was very much interested in hearing yesterday on this platform, the remarkable circumstances mentioned in the report of the Church Missionary Society, that one of our missionaries, Mr. Gordon, the first Protestant missionary who has ever gone to Candahar, found that he had been anticipated there; for almost the first person with whom he made acquaintance in Candahar was a Mohammedan Moulvie, who was studying the Arabic Bible. The Bible had got ahead of the missionary there. I remember an incident that occurred to myself only about five years ago. I had gone in company with a missionary of the Church Missionary Society to a city—Kerak—then absolutely independent of Turkish rule at least which asserted itself to be independent, governed by its own laws or none at all. It certainly was a city into which we, though not the first Englishmen that had been there, were the first ministers of the Gospel who had ever entered. We found ourselves in a few days very much like rats which had entered a trap. There we were, and we were kept there. But the people were not all Mohammedans. Amongst its Mohammedan inhabitants there was still a sprinkling of native Christians. Those Christians lived in a quarter of the town by themselves; and although they belonged to that corrupt and dark Church of the East, the Greek Church, still they were much more enlightened than their neighbours. They had a school in the place; and the Mohammedans, when the boys wished to learn arithmetic, did not disdain to send them to the Greek school. The teacher was a Syrian-Greek deacon. One day we were allowed, under the safe custody of our guards, to visit the school. We found there, in that wild Arab town, Mohammedan boys being taught by a Greek deacon; and what were the books that were in use? There were books of the Church Missionary Society in the lower class, and in the upper class, my Lord, a row of Mohammedan boys were sitting in front of the Greek deacon, and were reading the Gospel of St. John out of books translated by the noble American missionary, Vandyke, into the Arabic tongue, with the stamp of the British and Foreign Bible Society at their back. The Bible Society had there got ahead of the Missionary Society—not far, I am glad to say, for we have now got a missionary there, and I hope that we shall keep him, not a prisoner, but a free agent. As our missionaries have told us, the missionary without the Bible is like a workman without his tools; yet the Bible Society is very jealous as to how the tools should be used. The Rev. Canon then spoke of the way in which men want to trim the Bible to make it suit their own notions, and said. The inspiration of God's Word as the Word of God is the one object of their attack. And why? Because men want, more than ever in these days of free and independent thought, a religion that will serve them, not a religion that they will serve. They want, like the Romans, epicurean gods. They want idol gods. They want an elastic religion—one that will take their impression—not a stern, severe code of absolute right and wrong to which they must conform and mould themselves. The Bible is inflexible, and if the Bible be admitted to be inspired, they are forced to allow that it cannot be moulded. My Lord, I think that the Bible Society has great cause for thankfulness in the very interest which these attacks upon God's Word have aroused in other circles than those of believers. I do not know that there has ever been a greater blessing to the world of Biblical criticism than the shallow book of Dr. Colenso. Indirectly they led to the foundation of the Palestine Exploration Fund; and as I look at those two societies, in both of which I take a great interest, and whose work I have observed from the commencement—the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the Biblical Archaeological Society—and when I see the maps, and plans, and excavations of the one, and the volumes of ancient literature that are proceeding from the press of the other, I feel indeed that in all those volumes of the records of the past, worked out in the literature of the one society and the surveying of the other, we have been stirring up thousands of the thoughtful men. Scholars, who did not otherwise take an interest in the Bible, may have been led to study God's Word. They are studying it, and