

'Gentle Mr. Packington,' he says to the merchant, 'do your diligence, I pray you, to get them. I will pay you whatsoever they cost you. The books are naughty books, and I intend to get them and burn them all at Paul's Cross.' There is the second experiment of burning, you see. They began with bones and they went on to books. That was the next step. There was the burning of bones and then the burning of books. That was the comparative degree. Well, Tyndall's reply is quaint, almost arch. He says, 'I shall get money of him for these books to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out at the burning of God's Word, and the overplus of the money that shall remain shall make me more studious to correct, and newly to imprint the same.' And so, out of the burning of books, just as the devil and all his emissaries are accustomed to outwit themselves in their craftiness, there came the new and corrected edition of God's Holy Word. And that burning of books is continued yet. I hold in my hand here a report of the Upper Canada Bible Society. The report is not three years old, and in it there is the veritable statement that one of the colporteurs has distributed thirteen copies of the Holy Scriptures in the district just between Lake Huron and Lake Superior (which my friend Dr. Taylor, there, knows very well), and that, by the connivance or at the instigation of the Romish priests, twelve of those copies were, within the last three years publicly burnt. And yet there is a change, they say. Everybody is getting liberal, and tolerant, and merciful nowadays. But it is continued still where there is a chance of doing it without an outrage upon public feeling, because the principles of the hostility are the same. Then, you know, by-and-by the great witness himself was arrested and imprisoned, and multitudes were burnt with the "libel" or little book round their necks, and suffered for the truth of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ; and there came the superlative degree—the burning of bones, the burning of books, the burning of men. And what has come out of all this? Why, wherever there has been a determined opposition, wherever the forces of evil have gathered to a head, and concentrated force and effort for a decisive struggle, God has brought good out of evil—just, for instance, as when Rome sent forth the merciless Alva, or lit the fires of Lollard martyrdoms, or whetted her sword for a St. Bartholomew massacre, or gilt the prows of the Invincible Armada. What was the result? Only to shew the indestructibility of persecuted Truth. And now, to-day, when superstition on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, are, as his Grace of Canterbury said, "setting themselves" against the Truth; God has shewn us how He can work by simple men coming with a directness of aim, with a purpose grand in its simplicity, and, above all, with a firm, thorough, hearty belief—for that is the secret of it—with a firm, thorough hearty, belief in God and Christ, and His power to save at once and to the uttermost. God is waking up the masses of hitherto embalmed life in this metropolis of ours in a way such as we have not known in our generation. I believe, my lord, that God is a match for His enemies—that He is always on the alert, and that His providence is neither dead nor sleeping. He is in no haste to vindicate Himself; He is in no unseemly hurry. He knows the end from the beginning, and He can wait through the patient years, assured that the recompense shall come. But I do feel to-day that it should be ours, in the midst of all this, to give ourselves more thoroughly than we have done to earnest, hearty, Christian work. There is a tendency, I know, to leave old beliefs behind, and to press some imagined beyond of truth and beauty that nobody has ever tracked, much less explored; and there are many quarters in which it is not scrupled to say, with the distinguished German philosopher, that the desire for truth is a better thing than the possession of truth—a brilliant fallacy, but a fallacy notwithstanding. And it is considered a proof of manliness—alas! that it should be so, for it is one of the most hopeless signs of our times—to have outgrown the faith of our childhood, which, after all, is the sturdy faith