

encroachments on real work. Sometimes the question is raised whether it is wise to read Fiction. As works of Fiction are usually read, they fail to be of material advantage to those who read. Often such reading is positively harmful. We begin to read a book, and after having read a few pages, we get excited and wonder whether or not there is to be a marriage. We sit up all night and read page after page until we discover how the parties ended their flirtations. We do not get beyond the letter that killeth. We lose sight of the great underlying principle of the story, the phases of life that are being interpreted, and the artistic organic beauty of the work. Such reading is not profitable, and it is not fair to judge of the value to be derived from the reading of fiction by such treatment as this. Fiction to be profitable must be studied, and no doubt when good fiction is studied it is profitable. But how are you to know whether you are a student of Fiction or not? You have read the works of Sir Walter Scott. Have you studied them? You may have devoured, indiscriminately bolted down all he has written, but that is not study. If you have read a novel three or four times through with pencil or pen in your hand and a note-book by your side in which to jot down the leading ideas of the author, then you will pass for a student of fiction, and you will be competent to tell by your experience and by the influence it has had upon your life and thinking whether it is helpful or not. Let us not confound reading with study. You may read every night of the week till the small hours of the morning, but you may not be a student. You may be spending your strength for naught, wasting your energies and unfitting yourself for your work.

A man takes a book of the Bible, such as Isaiah, and begins to study it. He familiarizes himself with it by reading it carefully with pen in hand in the revised as well as the King James' Version, or better still in the original Hebrew. He makes his own analysis of it and becomes saturated with its thought and spirit. He comes to his own conclusions as to the meaning of the Prophet's teaching. He finds out the great princi-