

impiety of Herod. Now I should just like to ask, is not there something in this that may be quoted as a collateral evidence of inspiration? If an impostor, or a set of impostors had gone about to write a book, shrewd, skilful men, knowing human nature, and knowing how much of the Athenian there is about human nature still—for all the Athenians, you remember, and the strangers that were at Athens, were bent upon nothing else but either to hear or to tell some new thing;—if a shrewd impostor had tried to write a book, would not he have just been keen to satisfy the hunger of curiosity, which is, I venture to say, as rife in human nature to-day as it was in the time when the inspired writer wrote those words? Have not impostors uniformly done so? The Shaster and the Koran, the apocryphal gospels, the heathen mythologies, the Book of Mormon—do not they all peer underneath the surface, and give ridiculous and impious details in their endeavour to be wise above what is written? It is the Bible alone that preserves a dignified and majestic simplicity; and in this reticence upon all those matters which pamper curiosity, or that might, perhaps, have settled controversies with a word, but that are not necessary to make us wise unto salvation, there is proof, in the strong words of a former dignitary of the Church of England, a grand man—Archbishop Whately—that no impostor would, and no enthusiast could, have written the Scriptures, and they are not of man's device, therefore, but they are the words of the living God. Now, it has struck me, my lord, that we are sometimes in danger in these days of ours of conceding a great deal too much to our adversaries. I am afraid that one cause of the apparent hold which some of the fashionable scepticism of the present day has got among the people is a sort of hesitancy which Christians have come to shew in speaking with such men about their belief in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Now, if we let them see that we begin to doubt we have lost half the battle. Have we faith? That is just the question. Have we faith in our own cause? For my part, I am not disposed to yield a hair's breadth to impudent unbelief. For my part, I am disposed to claim—as his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, I rejoice to hear, claimed this morning—that the Bible should be the great intellectual educator of the age. Yes, I say the great intellectual educator. I know that witlings will sneer at this. It is good, they say, for feminine instincts—though that is a grand compliment to the ladies, by the way—good for feminine instincts, good for emotional satisfactions, but altogether out of place—a laggard behind the age—in reference to the manly growth of the intellect and of the reason of man. Well, Sir William Jones did not think so; Robert Boyle did not think so; Isaac Newton did not think so; and I think we may let that matter pass until we get a modern sceptical philosopher half a big as these. Guizot has put it strongly in his lectures on Civilization, where he claims that from the Reformation—which, by the way, was the very first thing which put the Bible into the hands of the common people—was the start in that race for intellectual progress which gave the first wholesale impulse to English literature, and which filled 'the spacious times of great Elizabeth with sounds which echo still.' And so with the social life of England, for the argument might be almost indefinitely extended. I am not at all concerned, however, in this meeting, to defend the Bible. I want to encourage ourselves in our adhesion to it—to its principles, to its precepts, to its hopes—and to stimulate our personal endeavour to circulate it unto the very ends of the earth. In my best moments, in my calmest and most trustful moments, I am not afraid. I do get a little fretful and impatient sometimes. I suppose that is in consequence of the infirmity, or of the lack of my faith; but I am not afraid in my highest and most trustful moments at all as to the future destiny of the Bible and of the Christianity which it embodies. I have marked how God has been in connection with it from the beginning. It is a marvellous thing to think about—that from the beginning where there has been a special need there has been a special interposition. I think I could trace out, if I had time, that God had a purpose of mercy towards