

responsibility, inevitableness, of private judgment; but it spreads a revelation which is order, not license. "It asserts liberty!" Yes; that liberty which God has intended to be as free to us as His own light and air. It asserts what is sometimes called the right, but which is more properly described as the duty, of private judgment—a duty which involves a great responsibility. I know of no responsibility equal to that of the exercise of private judgment in matters of religion. If you submit yourselves to the authority of one pope or twenty popes, that submission is itself an act of private judgment; and I know of no exercise of private judgment more daring or more criminal than that which decides to give into the keeping of another conscience-keeper that conscience for which God has made each individual man responsible. While I assert the right, the duty, the responsibility, the inevitableness, of private judgment, I say that the office of this society is to spread a revelation which is order, and not license. The Bible teaches no socialism and no communism. The liberty which the Bible offers encourages no such use of it as could be dangerous either to religious or civil order. The Bible rule is, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

4. This society is on the side of human progress, the lands of the Bible being notoriously the lands of light and growth. "On the side of human progress!" Is there any one person here present who wishes that the world of thought or of science should stand still, and say it has reached its terminus? I trust not; I trow not. We are for progress; when progress stops, existence stops. We have an opportunity, within the limits of one small country, of comparing districts which have the Bible with districts which have it not. I venture to appeal to every traveller in Switzerland as to which cantons there are those of light and progress—those in which the Bible is free, or those in which it is chained?

5. This society bears witness to a Christianity within and above all shapes and forms of ecclesiastical organization, without which Christianity itself could never be the religion of all nations. The society recognizes to the full existing differences of forms and creeds, but it says that within all church systems there is a deep-lying unity, which makes the gospel the voice of God to the heart of his creatures, and without which Christ himself could not be the desire of all nations.

6. This society is the handmaid of all churches in that work of evangelization which is the condition of the perpetual presence. All churches have to turn to this society for the implements of their evangelization. Is it quite fair for these to say, when using the British and Foreign Bible Society all the time, that there is something lacking, either to the completeness of its shape or to the shade of its complexion?

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If you cannot give away any books, I believe you do a good work when you sell them, or give money to help to produce them cheaply. If you cannot afford a whole Bible, something is done when a portion is given away or a Gospel is left in a cottage. You can never tell what may come of a single portion of the word of God—aye, of a leaf of it. Instead of regretting, as I have heard some do, that Bibles are sold for waste paper, and goods are done up in them, I am glad that it should be so. I admire the enterprise of Andrew Fuller, and some others long ago, who printed hymns upon papers which were to be used in the sale of cottons and other small wares. They gave those papers to tradesmen that they might do up their goods in them. So long as the truth does but travel, it does not matter how. If you can place the Bible where men may read it, who knows what may result? I knew a friend who, in purchasing his tobacco, found it done up in a passage of the word of God, and by the perusal of that portion became a converted man.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*