

companion of my life, wrecked and shattered, wounded and dying, yet how can I give thee up? Ye were not made for death; why will ye die?"

What more? "I remember that it was a *righteous Book*. There were pages in it when the wicked man had his own way; but presently God searched him out and brought him to judgment. It made me glad, and in the middle of my reading I thought—Would that the Book were at the basis of all political legislation, at the heart of all commercial enterprise; would that it were the secret of all civilization and the inspiration of all domestic and national life.

"And I remember this about it, that *it seems to be all other books*. I have read a great many books, and I feel now that I need not have read them; they are all here. Novels—it is all there in the prodigal son. Two men, the runaway son, the scapegrace, the far country, the riotous living, the harlot, the evil companionships, the bad treatment, and the coming home again. Joy! I never heard such silver bells ringing in all my life as the chimes in this Book. Sorrow! None like it. Its woes swallow up all other grief. Its cross, like the rod of Moses, swallows up all other crosses in its great tragic sorrow."

"But are there not some terrible things in that Book of yours?" "Yes, there are. There are stories in the Book that no minister dare read in the congregation. There are chapters that no publisher could take out separately and put in his shop window. Yes; but blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God even in that shame. These stories are in their right place in the Bible, surrounded by the lightnings and thunders of judgment in the Old Testament, and by the tears and tenderness, and touching death on the cross, in the New—all that is unfolded in the word Redemption."

Do not vindicate the Bible, if you please; let it alone. It needs no vindication; it is there. It has been assailed; still it is there. It has been assailed from points from which it does not start. It does not contemplate the things which have been turned into means of assault against it. Suppose a man should say, "An alkali neutralises an acid, therefore the New Testament is not inspired," what would you think of it? Suppose a man should say, "Two and two are four, therefore there can be no resurrection from the dead." Why, there is no link of connection—nothing to bring them together. So it is: the Bible has its own work: it starts from its own point; delivers its own message. It is not a book that comes within the region of logic, but of feeling, sorrow, want, imagination.

But does not the Apostle Paul reason? Not as if he wished to prove the existence of the thing, but in the sense that a man turns a diamond round and shows all its angles and sides and beautiful proportions—not as if he would prove that it is a diamond,—so Paul turns the truth round, that every phase of it may catch the sun; he never lays it down as a thesis or proposition, that there is a God. So with this Book. It does not say, "I am inspired, and I will prove it;" it simply says, "Read me, and read me all."

I want to remind you that it is possible to read a part as if it were the whole; to make too much of certain texts, and forget their bearing upon others, and so miss the proportion and analogy of faith. The man who takes out a solitary text and founds a denomination on it, is not Biblical, but only textual. He is not a statesman, only a politician. He takes out a single line, exaggerates it, and does not consider its relationship to the manifold infiniteness of the remaining revelation.

I can prove by geography that the world is not round—that is to say, by taking a partial and local view of the surface of the earth, I can defy any man to prove that it is round. There are great rocky points, great crags and rocks shooting up into the air, some ten thousand feet high, others fifteen thousand and more. Then there are great valleys, sinking as deeply into the ribs and heart of the earth. Looked at in this light, no proposition can be more monstrous than that the earth is round. But you must not look at the part, but at the whole. You must look at astronomy. The