

It lies in the pulpit indeed, but it is not the only thing that *lies* there, sometimes. For any man is guilty of lying who does not take that book as the motto and also the guide of his message to the children of men. Any man stands before the people as a lying prophet who preaches to them metaphysics, or the "higher theology," or "higher criticism," or "philosophy," or human reason in any shape, when the Bible is demanding that we should simply point out its treasures to the hungry and thirsty multitudes all round about us, who are crying and clamouring for bread. We have no right to treat the Bible as the pirate very often treats the loyal flag when he runs it up to the mast head, and then acts in a manner altogether foreign to it.—And so I say the result of opening up the Scripture to the people will be just this: we shall have people growing up all over our land who are more or less educated up to the great purposes of God, and wise in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a wonderful conservative virtue in the Scriptures of which we do well to think. Tell me which is the prosperous nation? That nation, I say, is prosperous, whose reverence for law is high, whose ideal of character is noble and exalted, and whose set and determined purpose is to preserve the integrity of religion.

This Bible Society, which you were kind enough to ask me to represent in some feeble measure to-night, is the representative of these three great ends; it represents law, character and religion. I am in favour of the endowment of religion, and I say that if there is anything which ought to be endowed by the State, it is the Bible Society, because it is the mightiest force of police that we have moving on the face of society at this hour. Does not it ensure to us the happy home? Does not it lift up to us the ideal of noble patriotism? Does not it teach us what citizens ought to be, and enter into the hearts of men and cleanse the forces for good and evil that are there? I am here this evening because I believe so strongly in the absolute necessity of the Bible for the people. I am a preacher, but rather would I never preach another sermon,—I am a professor, but rather would I never teach another student,—than that the Bible should be taken away. I believe that we could do without everything rather than do without the Bible. I believe that without the Bible everything else, however favourable to religion, is sure to fail.

And so, my dear friends, I conclude with an admiration which I think is more fervid than ever for this grand old book, the pride and stronghold of our common Protestantism; and with the earnest desire that we may prove ourselves worthy of the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. You will remember how in the old days of Israel's pride and Israel's shame, when the famine had shut up the windows of heaven, and the heated sky hung above the land from day to day for three years, hard as brass, you will remember how suddenly a little cloud rose in the horizon the size of a man's hand, you will remember the mighty prophet of the Lord, Elijah, starting and running before the chariot of Ahab to the entering in of Jezreel. I look upon him,—he seems to be the very embodiment of the principles of Scripture,—progressive, for it moves before the chariot of princes, guiding them into paths of honour, virtue, and dignity; conservative, for like Elijah, it stands abased and silent in the presence of the Lord. Fearless in the sight of men, girt with reverence when it stands in the sight of God. Oh, let us take heart this evening for the grand work that lies before us, and let the remaining months of this Jubilee year be months which shall not only fill the hearts of all Queen Victoria's subjects with joy, but make the very angels in Heaven rejoice over that jubilee which is still more magnificent and joyous than the Jubilee of Victoria, over the increase of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace, and over souls saved by His gospel.