

Parts, and he told his lordship that in carrying out his work in Japan he would have been paralysed had it not been for the generous way in which this Society had supplied his needs, and aided in the dissemination of the Scriptures, and his lordship was quite satisfied that the more leisure time they had to study the work which was being done by the Society, and the manner in which it was being done, the more anxious they would be to help on that work.

In the present day there was another side to their meeting on such occasions as that. They were present, if he understood it rightly, not simply to express their sympathy with the work—which he had done, and wished to do as fully as he could—but to express simply and humbly and with that solemn awe which all should feel who dared to touch the ark of God, their faith in the work, and their thankfulness for that treasure which they had in England—the Bible circulated freely everywhere. It was, perhaps, desirable that that should be said as simply and humbly, and yet as strongly as possible. They valued the Bible as much as their forefathers had ever valued it. They thanked God for it in this nineteenth century as much as any preceding age that had acknowledged its value. That was important, because one of the principal trials through which Christian people were passing to-day arose from what appeared to be a neglect of the Bible, and contempt thrown upon it. This arose from many causes—first of all, from the blessings which God gave to them in the development of spiritual life. Numbers of persons had been raised up who had written books which are full of comfort and instruction and guidance to Christian people—books full of holy aspirations, thoughtful meditations, and practical directions. They thanked God for this, but as this was an age of work—a busy age, in which men had not the time to devote to study which they once had, there was a danger that popular fascinating religious books too often took the place of quiet prayerful study of the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Another reason arose from the characteristics of the time in which we live. God had given them greater blessings than any previous age of Christianity ever experienced. There never was a time in which they could find a more earnest devotion to the cause of God than to-day. But there were, no doubt, certain characteristics of this age which were making Christian people anxious about the fate of the Bible; not anxious because they believed God would allow His Word to perish, but anxious lest it should lose that place which, thank God, it had hitherto held, and to the holding of which they ascribed, to a large extent, their national prosperity. This also arose from many causes, the first of which he need scarcely mention, as it had existed through all ages. There had always been men who had given themselves up either to the world, the flesh, or the devil. If a man was hugging his money, and would not put aside the portion that belonged to God because he wanted it himself, he must hate the Book which tells him that the love of money is a root of all evil. The man who was given to pride, and who looked down upon others because they were not as himself, must hate the Book that says God fights against the proud man to the death, and that the proud heart is an abomination unto the Lord. Men did not like the Bible because it was too much of a reflection of God's truth. But there were a number of persons who, in consequence of the great and wonderful progress made in this generation, because of the marvellous works being done on every side by the ingenuity of man, had come to feel that man was almost on a level with his Creator, that man had really brought himself into being. In the words of the old prophet they seemed to say "I am; and there is none beside me." The great improvement in everything, and the wonderful progress that the world had made, caused them to lose their heads, and they seemed to think they possessed the power to measure the infinite, forgetting that, "the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity" only revealed His secrets to those who were of a humble and contrite spirit. He wished to speak of them in all