

of my countrymen that after all they will go sheer over to Popery. I am glad to see certain hopeful signs among those who have got to be very High Church indeed, that they love the souls of men and mean to preach the Gospel. I believe that is because the Bible is open, and when it is open, men may go a long way in their tag-rags and ribbons and the like, but there is a spell upon them that will hold them in some measure to the Truth; there is a centripetal power which will not allow them, after all, to rush right away into the dark regions beyond, which are said to be under the dominion of his Holiness the Pope. Spread the Bible, dear friends, because *that will bring us together*. If anything will ever knit together the visible Church of God, it must be around Holy Scripture that we shall unite—certainly never anywhere else. I would rather say, I believe, the whole Church of Jesus Christ is and always has been one in the sense in which our Saviour prayed it might be one; for I find myself incapable of believing that the petitions which He offered to his Father in that dread night in Gethsemane were unheard of God. I believe there is a deep, secret, essential, vital union between all the elect of God who have been quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, and have been washed in the “fountain filled with blood.” Our differences of opinion upon some points are incidental to thoughtful humanity, and have their uses. I think we keep each other alive to truth, and we wake each other up—not always in the right spirit, perhaps, but our merciful God overrules it for the right. But if any man shall say of any other man beneath the stars that he sincerely loves Jesus Christ, and that I do not count him my brother, he lies in his throat. I am his brother, and and there is my right hand. If I be one with Christ, it is no credit to me to say, ‘I will meet him on the platform of the Bible Society.’ Why, I cannot help it. If my little finger, because it is more properly washed than the rest of my body—I am alluding now to the Baptists who are just that—if my little finger were to say, ‘I will have no communion with the rest of the body,’ such a speech would be unworthy, and moreover could not be carried out. That well-washed finger can only get out of the body by death, and as long as it lives in the body it must commune with all the living members whether it will or no, because the vitality of the whole body necessarily causes a communion between all the members of the body. It must be so; we cannot help ourselves. You shall reach down from your shelves a book, and not know who wrote it, and find your heart warming and glowing towards the author, and when you look at the title-page you will say, ‘There, now! I believe that man spoke at the Liberation Society.’ Or else, on the other hand, you will say, ‘That is the man who said those terrible things in favour of Church and State at the Church Defence Association.’ Well, my dear friends, I think there is room enough in this great world, and plenty of room in a land of liberty, for us to speak our own minds, and love each other just as well after we have done. I, for one, feel something like Robin Hood, who never received a man into his company till he had played him at quarter-staff. Honest controversy affords us healthy exercise; besides it tries the joints of our harness, and lets us know where our weak points may be. But if ever we are to meet—and God grant we may!—if ever in the onward movement of Providence Christians shall come more closely together, it must be through our all coming nearer and nearer to the great standard of Truth, which is the Word of God. Dear friends, I would urge very especially that we all try to distribute the Scriptures just now, because *a very large number of persons have been converted of late*—there can be no doubt about that—and they will want instruction, and no instruction will suit them but that which comes from the Book. I feel great confidence in the present religious movement, because every one must admit that the Bible is to the front. One of the marks of the converts, if you see them outside the Opera House or the Agricultural Hall, is, that he or she is carrying a very unwieldy Bible of Bagster’s best edition. I am afraid it may in some cases become a mere phylactery; but I am quite satisfied that the