

We shall mark our track by the ruined fortresses of our adversaries; they shall only be remembered by the crumbling walls of the high places from which they defied us, which shall be a desolation, the habitation of the bittern and of the owl for ever and ever. I want to speak practically now. I think the time has gone for defending the Bible against anybody, whoever he may be—whether he happens to be a bishop, or to come from the opposite side. Wherever he may happen to come from, let him come! The Bible has been so often defended, and the defences are so admirable, that any more outworks would almost seem to be superfluous. I look upon the Bible now as the other day I did upon a little village church which I came across in the middle of a wood—Oakwood Chapel, in Surrey—a church subjected to a great many slips of the soil, or inclemencies of weather, and therefore buttressed until there are about twice as many bricks in the buttresses as there are in church. There seems to me to have been twice as much done in some ages in defending the Bible as in expounding it, but if the whole of our strength shall henceforth go to the exposition and spreading of it, we may leave it pretty much to defend itself. I do not know whether you see that lion—it is very distinctly before my eyes; a number of persons advance to attack him, while a host of us would defend the grand old monarch, the British Lion, with all our strength. Many suggestions are made and much advice is offered. This weapon is recommended, and the other. Pardon me if I offer a quiet suggestion. Open the door and let the lion out; he will take care of himself. Why, they are gone! He no sooner goes forth in his strength than his assailants flee. The way to meet infidelity is to spread the Bible. The answer to every objection against the Bible is the Bible. Meet any man who raises objections against it, and very rarely will you find that he has candidly studied it, and sought to understand it. It does sometimes occur, but even in such a man's case I think, if he would read it again, and especially if he would ask the Author what the meaning of it is, and the Author is still accessible, he would soon come to a knowledge of the Truth; at any rate, I shall not be likely to convince him by argument. You have heard the story of the good clergyman who attended the Bampton Lectures—a very excellent course of lectures, no doubt—and thanked God that, after hearing them all, he still remained a Christian. After reading some of the defences of the Bible, it really is a grand thing to find one's self a Christian at all. Spread the Bible, every one of you, and spread the Bible for this reason—that, first of all, *it will help to keep us all right*—I mean the different ministers here belonging to different Churches. It is an admirable law which forbids the adulteration of milk, and it is a capital plan to keep a lactometer, by which he may see how much of adulteration there may be in the milk of the Word. I am never afraid of the Bible myself on Baptist grounds, and when any young person comes to me and says, "Can you recommend a work which sets forth your views of baptism?" I always say, "Yes, there is a little book which you may buy for 2d.—the New Testament—a wonderful Baptist book"—in fact, I never give them any other. If they cannot see it there, well, then, I must love them all the same, if they love the Lord Jesus Christ. We all of us try to spread the Gospel and to preach Jesus Christ fully and freely; but we are something like those water-carriers in Venice who cry out, "Aqua! Aqua!"—and it is very pleasant sound on a broiling summer's day. I thought once I would have a little water, and the water-merchant gave me a glassful for my halfpenny. Alas! it tasted of the glass; I did not like it. A good deal of that which is served out as Gospel tastes of the glass; I am afraid few of us hand it out quite pure. What a grand thing it is that the people can keep a fountain at home, at which they can go and draw for themselves! When you give them the Bible there is no necessity for their drinking the Gospel with an Episcopalian twang, which is not very sweet to me—nor for their having the Dissenting twang, which is not very sweet to other people: they can just go and draw from the living fountain the pure Word of God: therefore spread it, for it will help to keep us all right. I cannot believe it