

the rising generation that Christians have all during many centuries been under a mistake in supposing the Bible to be the Word of God. Great attempts, I say, are made for this purpose. A circulation not, thank God, equal to that circulation of the Scriptures of which we have been told in the Report, but still great and well organized, the object of which is to shake our faith in the Scriptures, is going on, not only in this metropolis and throughout all the great towns of this kingdom, but in our rural districts also, and not in this kingdom only, but throughout the whole of Europe; and if we are wise, we shall not by any unnecessary divisions amongst ourselves play the game of our common adversaries, and expose that Holy Word and that Christian religion of which we are put in trust to the assaults of the enemy, whilst we are quarrelling amongst ourselves. This Society has always appeared to me to recommend itself to the good sense of Englishmen by many qualities—by none more than by the simplicity of the work which it takes in hand. All Christians, nominally at least, allow that the canon of the Old and New Testament contains the Word of God; all Christians, however they may practically neglect it, theoretically bow to this Word of God; and therefore by undertaking that work which all Christians, if they are worthy of the name, must allow to be the work of our Heavenly Master, we cast aside points of difference, and not merely theoretically, but practically, find that we can act together. This is a work, I repeat, which commends itself to all common-sense and practical Englishmen. Our endeavour is to multiply copies of the Holy Scriptures, and to spread them throughout the world. I have said that we live in an age in which many dangers threaten Christian men. There are the attempts of infidel workers to shake our belief in the Holy Scriptures. The proper answer to these persons is simply to place the Sacred Volume in the hands of all who can read it. The Holy Scriptures, as they exist amongst us, are in their integrity. That is a great fact—a fact which it is very difficult for the most subtle infidel to account for, except on the hypothesis that the statements which these Scriptures contain are true. Therefore, if we desire to meet those who by subtle arguments are endeavouring to unsettle the belief of mankind in the divinity of the Word of God, we not only show the greatest confidence in our cause, but we take, I believe, the wisest course for advancing it by simply pointing to the Volume, placing it in the hands of all men, and calling upon them to judge for themselves whether its morality and teachings are of human origin—whether the truths to which it points as to the land of spirits are such as could have come into the heart of man had he not been instructed by the Spirit of God. So that the very fact of the circulation of the Scriptures shews that we have adopted a wise course in answer to the cavils of those who would check that reverence for the Sacred Volume. But we are exposed not only to the arguments of infidel writers, but to an attempt to secularise the whole system of our education, the whole system of our government in this land; and our answer to all such attempts is this: remembering that the word secular speaks of the world and things worldly, that the very name means a worldly system, and that the system we desire to initiate is a spiritual and religious system, we say we shall best meet the attempts of Secularists by placing in the hands of all who can read this great charter of our spiritual rights, and enabling men to understand that it is not for a short life in this world, but for an eternal life in the land of spirits, that the human soul is to be prepared by education, and that the affairs of this world can only be well conducted if there is a distinct reference to higher sanction than secular, and to higher truth than secular knowledge can convey. I think, then, that we adopt a wise course, as to both speculative and practical matters, by circulating, as we do, as freely as possible these Scriptures of Truth. For my part, I believe that the civilization of Europe rests on the Holy Scriptures. I believe that during these last centuries it has been a perpetual appeal to the truths circulated by the Scriptures that has made the nations of Europe different from the degraded races of more savage countries, or of those old worn-out barbarian na-