

vista of thought which it will be simply impossible to traverse in the time assigned to me, and therefore I shall traverse it on one consideration only, that while the Word of God on one side is essentially divine in its origin, and divine in the results it purposes to accomplish, on the other hand it is essentially human, and must be dealt with as human—or I might add a little to the word and say humane. In fact it seems to me as if the Bible might take to itself the motto of a famous Roman poet and say, "I am humane and nothing that is human is foreign to me;" because when we come to examine its aspects, worth and tendencies, we will find that there is no aspect of human society which it does not touch and bless, civil, social and domestic, religious, or political. Extend the range of your observation, and take in any department of human thought or activity that you will,—commerce, art, science, literature, jurisdiction, education, government. Gather into your fold even the greatest possible variety of human countenances and conditions, varying between the educated Englishmen and the degraded Kaffir, the fair-faced Anglo-Saxon, and the swarthy Hindoo, and with every one of these the Word of God has to do. There is not an interest connected with any class in life or in society which the Word of God does not claim especially for its own, and which, if allowed to come in contact with that aspect of life, it does not guarantee—if allowed a fair trial—to benefit and bless.

And therefore it is, sir, that when I come to think of it in my own mind I cannot forbear passing a heavy censure of condemnation on the infidelity of to-day, which would rob us of a blessing that in its effects, that in its operation in the world, is so broad and Catholic and all comprehensive. It seems to me that infidelity stalks abroad in our streets, so far as it is found there, actuated more or less by the spirit of the man (if such a being in human form could be found)—who would approach some poor cripple, painfully making his progress through our streets, leaning on his crutches, and knock them from under him, without enabling him to walk in health and strength; and this identically is what the infidelity of to-day is trying to do: it offers no substitute for our common Christianity; it would take from us that which we already possess; and it fails to provide anything that is better or surer. Why, sir, even on the ground, supposing it were the case for a moment, that our Christianity and its hopes were a delusion—this would be cruel; but it is founded on a rock, and that rock is Christ. All prophecy is the testimony of Christ Jesus. There, brethren, discover always the chief and lasting element in the value of the Bible Society, because, let that Word be once taken from our midst, and the hopes of mankind, here and hereafter, wither in uttermost disappointment. I do not desire to enter this evening—it would not be proper that I should enter—on the discussion of the unbelief of the present day; that, as we have just been told, is only one of the lines of thought that might be suggested. I desire to say only this much in connexion with it, because it seems impossible, on such an occasion, to pass it altogether over, that it is true there is more or less of doubt and uneasiness in the minds of men, with regard to the future of the Word of God. I think it is undeniable that even in the minds of Christian men, there is a vague and undefined distrust lest something or other may possibly befall it in the future. Even those who believe it most firmly and hug it most closely to their hearts cannot suppress the feeling. What, if after all this brilliant unbelief of to-day should find some weak spot in the chain of evidence of the divine origin of the Word of God, at which it would succeed in snapping it asunder and scattering its broken and worthless fragments to the uttermost extremities of the earth. It is true that that feeling of uneasiness does exist; it is true also that that feeling is strengthened and confirmed in some minds by the consideration that already, as the result partly of scientific investigation and research, cer-