

A PLEA

FOR THE

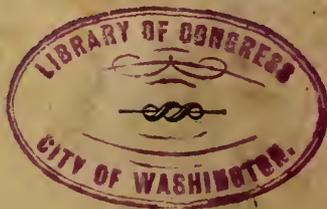
RESTORATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

TO

THE SCHOOLS,

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE XXIII. ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, IN THE CITY OF
NEW YORK, ON THE 8TH DAY OF MAY, 1839.

BY ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE,



Baltimore:

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.....
1839.

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RESTORATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

TO THE SCHOOLS,

Being the substance of an Address delivered at the XXIII. anniversary of the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, in the city of New York, on the 8th day of May, 1839; by the REV. ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, in support of the following resolution, viz:

Resolved, 'That the use of the Scriptures as a reading-book in common schools, is of such importance, as to deserve immediate and universal encouragement, in all our States and Territories.

MR. BRECKINRIDGE, observed in submitting the foregoing resolution, that there are certain great principles, certain fundamental ideas, which always are, and necessarily must be assumed as true, and even indisputable, in every enterprise, system, and organization which can exist amongst men. If it were not so, all progress would be impossible; and the commonest attempts to perform the most pressing duties, might lead only to contention and embarrassment.

Thus, in the very fact of our organization as a society for the printing and distribution of the Scriptures, we have assumed as undeniable, the great truths, that the Bible is a divine revelation from God, that it is given for the whole human race, that it is most fit to be received by all, and that it is perfectly adapted to produce its intended effects: nay more; that it is our duty to make efforts, for the multiplication, the dissemination, and the general reception of these Scriptures amongst men; and that our present form of action, is one proper and wise mode of performing this sacred obligation. But even beyond this, we have from the beginning firmly advanced other great axioms of our system. For we have agreed that this noble version, shall be the only English translation which we, as a body, will print and circulate; and that in every case, but especially in this, we will neither add, nor permit, note or comment, on the sacred text. These princi-

ples constitute this society a Bible society, in opposition to the notion of its being a society for making commentaries, glosses, or other like things; they distinguish it as a Christian Bible society, in contradistinction from all schemes that would make it virtually Jewish by limiting its action to the Old Testament, or something little better, in restricting it chiefly or entirely to the New; and they equally mark it out, as a Bible society of Reformed Christians, carrying out their distinctive views and faith, in clear distinction, from the papistical doctrines, touching the great questions, what is the Word of God? and how? to whom? and for what purposes should it be distributed?

It had been happy, both in other lands, and in our own, if the friends of this great cause had always clearly marked these obvious truths, and respected the distinctions which flow from them. It will be useful to us, now that we are about to take a step in advance, and commit ourselves and this institution to a new principle, or at the least to a new and most important aspect of certain principles, not heretofore so fully developed; to keep steadily in our view the great truths from which we start, that our warrant, and full justification may be ever before our eyes. For that the successful prosecution of our work, and the openings which Providence spreads successively before our advancing steps, should require us to acknowledge these additional truths, or force upon us new aspects of duty:—is what has again and again occurred to us, and what will hereafter occur in proportion as we are attentive to God's dealings, and faithful to them. I understand the resolution which has been this moment adopted, in regard to the duty imposed on distributors of the Bible to secure if possible its faithful perusal, also, to cover a case very much of this kind. And still more clearly, the one I stand here to advocate, has this great advantage; that while it fully accords with the whole objects and principles of the society, it opens a vast and nearly unexplored field for its exertions. It is the beginning, as I trust, of a national effort, the first expression of a national purpose, to restore in youth the dissevered connexion between piety and knowledge, between God and the first search of childhood after mental treasures.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of my duty is, that its performance should ever have been needful—but especially in this country—and at the present moment. From the beginning of time, till a period very near to us—and amongst the entire race of man, except only Reformed Christians of these latter days; the general principle remotely occupying the base of this subject—has been cordially, and universally received and acted on, as of paramount importance. Every people, without exception, has thought it necessary to teach its religion to its children, as the very basis of all other knowledge; and every nation that has

been sufficiently advanced to have a written religion, and places for the regular instruction of youth in knowledge, has made the national religion a national study, in childhood. The sacred books of all heathen nations have been known of all, who knew any thing whatever. The pages of the Koran, in every age and country, have been the first study of every follower of the false prophet. The very highest literature of all antiquity is thoroughly impregnated with the popular religion; so that every Greek and Roman youth was made a scholar and a pagan, by the self same process. The Hebrew parent, by the most express command of God, made his child from its very birth, by every outward mark and every inward accomplishment; at home, by the way-side, in the school, in the sanctuary, in the halls of justice, on the field of battle, and upon the throne itself,—thoroughly and intensely a Hebrew. The early Christian church, was in no degree less assiduous, in the same devotedness to the exact and universal religious instruction of the young. Every corrupt and apostate sect which has forsaken or renounced our divine Redeemer—and most conspicuously those who have most thoroughly and openly rejected the Bible—has instilled each its own peculiar heresies, by every means, not excluding their schools, into the minds of their children. The leaders of the glorious reformation of the sixteenth century, and for two centuries and more, all their true followers, received as from God the solemn duty, of the public as well as private instruction of the young in the word of life. The illustrious spirit of Luther as he drew near his rest, in a review of his literary labours, rejoiced the most in this, that he had written his book *De Servo Arbitrio* against Erasmus, and had prepared his Small Catechism; a performance, which like the similar one of his immortal fellow labourer, John Calvin, remains, each, after the lapse of three hundred years, respectively the symbol of churches, states, and races. Nay, until a period so little remote that many who hear me, can recall it, the school house and the church, stood side by side, throughout our country; and the Bible and the Catechism constituted, in both, the basis of perpetual instruction.

It is not my present duty, to trace the causes and the manner of the exclusion of the Bible from our schools. It is sufficient to indicate, as the chiefest,—the spirit of Popery which every where suppresses the Word of God; the spirit of Indifferentism, which treats it with total slight; and the spirit of Infidelity, which openly rejects it. Other causes, less obvious, have no doubt conspired, in the production of the same fatal result; amongst which are perhaps to be ranked as of no small importance, the excessive multiplication of school books of inferior quality; a proportionate increase of incompetent and unworthy teachers; and a general disposition to prostitute to unworthy ends, that part of the education of youth, which could be turned

to immediate profit. Nor can it be denied that the system of Sabbath school instruction, so valuable in itself, has been at least an occasion for this great evil; that the public has been allowed, it may be even induced to consider the moral instruction thus imparted, a sufficient substitute for that formerly given in the week-day schools; if not indeed for that before received under the paternal roof.

A general review of the efforts which have been made in our day, to restore the Bible to the schools, would occupy far too much time, to be now attempted: although this, like the mode of its exclusion, is a portion of this great subject, full of interest and importance. It may be sufficient to state in passing, that the minds of Christians over the whole world have been for some years deeply pondering this matter. The Protestant churches generally throughout Europe have made a more steadfast resistance, than ourselves, to the exclusion of the Bible from the course of general education; and are therefore, in this respect, generally, in a better condition than ourselves. In England, there is no school system of sufficient extent, to deserve the name of national; but the institution which has the oversight of what are called the National Schools, has introduced the Scriptures into them. The schools of Scotland, so far as they have been under the care of the national church of that kingdom, remain on their ancient model. In Ireland, a systematic attempt was recently made by a committee of the British House of Commons, which in 1825, 6 and 7, carefully investigated the whole subject of Irish education; with a view to provide a general and thorough system of popular instruction. The result is given in nine reports, which together contain considerably more than three thousand printed pages in folio; and the sum of all is, that the most ignorant and illiterate of all civilized states, absolutely repudiated by the high dignitaries of the papal church, every system of public, nay even of gratuitous instruction, which should not as a starting point, reject the Bible, and admit the dogmas of Popery. As it regards our own country, the only successful effort of a general kind with which I am acquainted has been lately made in the State of Maryland; where the admirable society which I represent this day, are now in the midst of an attempt, which has been attended with the most cheering success.* In the course of that movement two facts of great

*Resolutions presented by the Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge, and unanimously adopted by the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Bible Society at their regular monthly meeting at the Depository, on Thursday, the 18th of April, 1839.

1. "Resolved, That this Board has learned through the monthly report of the Corresponding Secretary, with devout gratitude to Almighty God, that the Bible has been introduced by the proper authorities, into the Public Schools of the city of Baltimore, as one of their regular reading books.

importance in themselves, and strongly illustrative of the past and present spirit of the country, have been fully established. The first is, that the public mind is more thoroughly prepared for this great reform, and all the sources of public influence and authority much more accessible in regard to it, than the most sanguine had supposed; that is, God has prepared the work to our hands, before we had faith and zeal to undertake it. The second fact is, that the more pretending the schools are, the more completely is God excluded from them, and the more decided is the opposition to the introduction of the Bible; while many of the humblest sort have all along kept the Scriptures in them: that is, the richest sort of our people, in this, as in many other respects, have been amongst the most of all indifferent to God, and removed from an evangelical influence. It is an item in this hasty outline, too significant and too pleasing to be omitted, that all our Christian missionaries, it is believed without exception, have made the Bible the principal class book in every school established by them.

Let me now present in a more direct form some of the great considerations which decide our duty on the subject before us. In doing this I shall separate such as more particularly regard the *individual* aspect of the question, from those which may be considered as pertaining more properly to its *social* character. And in presenting both views, the occasion admonishes me, rather to make suggestions, than to attempt an argument.

It may be observed then, as the first axiom of every *individual* consideration of this subject, that religion is the most imperative necessity of the human soul. No people have ever been without the elements of a regular system of religious faith; nor can as many single persons, be computed in any age or nation, who are destitute of the religious sentiment, as there can be of persons destitute of reason, of speech, of a perfect human form. So that man is as essentially a religious, as he is a rational, a speaking, or even a defined being at all. It is equally indubitable, that this necessity of the soul, is developed as early as any other want of it; and it is evolved with a steadiness, and intensity equal to any other. Upon what other principle are we to account for the horrible excesses, and the inconceivable follies of the human race, 'in connexion with this solemn and all-pervading sentiment of our spiritual dependence, this ever press-

2. "That this Board records with thankfulness and deep humility its sense of the great honor put on them by the Lord, in having used their feeble agency in the work which has had so speedy and happy an issue.

3. "That we find in this affecting token of divine favor, a great encouragement to proceed with renewed vigor in the general work committed to us: and more especially, in the important business of restoring the Bible as a class book to all the schools of our commonwealth."

ing sense of our spiritual necessities? And what conceivable excuse can be pleaded, for not providing for this necessity from the first moment of its developement? For not directing this sentiment, by an instruction as ceaseless as its own activity? For not sustaining and moulding this confiding and absorbing impulse by the power and the wisdom, which God has made manifest, to this very end?

Let it be farther considered, that there are but two possible foundations, upon one or other of which, all religion must repose. One is *authority*; the other *conviction*. The former, professing to emanate from the throne of God, and to be perpetuated in a manner always supernatural, sustains its pretensions by unceasing miracles, and appears before men only to state its claims, and receive unqualified obedience to its behests. To hear, to believe, and to obey, are in its view the sole duties of mankind; while to reason, to investigate, to compare, to enquire, to analyze, are all alike rebellious against its sacred character. On the other hand, the religion of conviction, recognizing God as its author, and the present blessedness and eternal glory of man, as its immediate ends, throws open the heart, the mind, and the conscience to its sweet and ennobling influences. It appeals constantly to the understanding; it pleads for nothing more earnestly, than for the most ample, thorough and mature consideration; it asks for dominion over the affections, the conscience, the intellect, only when that dominion shall have been conceded by a willing, an enlightened, a convinced spirit. This is our religion. This Bible is at once its sacred repository, and the great instrument of its propagation. Why then shall we withdraw it from the very seats of knowledge? Why withhold it from the active and enquiring spirit of childhood? Our religion is based on knowledge, founded in liberty, approved by conscience. Let us act as if we felt this to be true.

In the general education of youth, we commit a great mistake as to what education really is; and in deciding who are educated, fall into a fatal error. To omit, in education, all moral training—is to train imperfectly for time, and not at all for eternity. It is, indeed, to neglect the man himself, and train some of his inferior powers. No man is or can be educated, whose moral faculties, have not been adequately trained; and if they have been mistaught, he has been enslaved, not educated; degraded not enlightened.—Now it so happens, that amongst us, the case is so presented, by reason of a thousand concurring circumstances, that no adequate moral instruction can be furnished generally in our public schools; unless the Bible itself be put into the hands of the pupils. So that we are shut up to the necessity, of rejecting from public education all true discipline and instruction, of the better and more urgent part of our being; or of using for those purposes, the best and greatest and fittest

of means, the teacher of all teachers, the very word of God himself. Blessed alternative; which forces a people panting to be taught, to remain in ignorance, or learn of God!

For if we restrict our views of education so narrowly as to embrace in its scope, only that which is purely mental; no absurdity can be more audacious than to reject the Bible, even from such a plan. Is it of use to know what we are, what we can be, what we have been? To know how we can be and achieve whatever is most excellent? Is it a part of instruction to set before us, the highest exhibitions of whatever is great and striking in the past? The greatness of virtue, the greatness of passion, of achievement, of effort, of transcendent civilization, of unparalleled crime? Well, what is the Bible? It is amongst other things, the record, the safest, often the only record of the largest, the longest, the most striking part of the history of genius, of knowledge, of sublime adventure, of all-glorious success,—yea of man himself! It is the text book, out of which to unriddle the great mystery of God's providence, in the government of the world! The greatest of all poets, philosophers, orators, moralists, lawgivers, rulers and conquerors, who have adorned those long annals which cover two-thirds of the whole duration of human existence here below; these are the men who have written this book! It contains their legacy of wisdom and instruction, to generations of generations! A legacy so vast and so enduring, that one single man, and he the beginner of the book, has bestowed in a few brief pages, the elements of civilization, of organized society, of law, of morals, and of religion upon every age that has succeeded him; and stamped the impress of his mind, upon the whole human race! Why, this book, which is the sum and substance of all literature more ancient than the Greek, is the substratum also of whatever exists in our modern tongues. The two great protestant translations of the Bible, the Germanic and our own, formed, in truth, the two languages; and they reign over them still when centuries have passed, the highest classic respectively in each. In sober verity this book is not only the book of God, but also the book of the human race. So that to reject it is at once to be separated from the Lord and from enlightened man!

Let us turn for a moment to the *social* aspect of this question. As there are but two principles on which religion can repose, so also there are but two, on which the social state can be perpetuated amongst men. Organized society, in any supportable, or even possible form, can be sustained only in one of two modes. The *first* method limits the numbers who take part in the public authority or control, to those who are presumed to be capable of these functions: increasing or reducing the amount, as experience shall suggest, or necessity enforce. Upon this prin-

ciple the great bulk of human institutions have been constructed; and so simple is it, and so deeply seated in the nature of the case, that the mass of mankind has been generally unable, or unwilling (and the distinction is immaterial to the argument)—to prevent their own disfranchisement, and to arrest the tendency of power to accumulate in a few, often in a single will. We cannot be too profoundly sensible, that in the long run, power not only should not, but cannot be exercised by those unfit to wield it; and that all attempts to violate this necessity, entail the destruction of society itself. The *second* method, proceeds on the assumption that the whole society is endowed with this capacity; and that, in the particular case, all are, or all can be prepared to take part in every exercise of public authority. It is on this second principle, that all our political institutions are founded. Our great republic, and all our free and sovereign commonwealths, have been frankly periled upon this great and stirring truth, that man is capable of self-government. Not man every where; for history would contradict us. Not man, embruted and demoralized; for our previous reasonings show this to be absurd. Not man generically, embracing women and children, idiots and slaves; for this subverts the very order of nature. But generally the truth, that man, enlightened, civilized, and free, is the safest depository of all ultimate authority; and the wisest dispenser of so much as the exigencies of society require to be parcelled out, for common use. If this be not true, our country is undone. If it be true, the people must nevertheless be sustained in that condition, which we call enlightened, civilized and free.

But I believe no reflecting man, will hesitate to admit, that of all influences which affect the character, the prosperity, the duration, the glory and the usefulness of nations—moral influences are incomparably the most controlling. And of that immense class of influences, which might, in a large sense, be called moral, the most important and enduring, are beyond all doubt, those which are strictly religious. Is it too much to assert, that the influence of a national religion, is greater upon national character, than all other influences combined? Is it going too far to declare, that the destinies of states have been more deeply affected by their religious faith, than by all other circumstances? The very history of mankind, is essentially and chiefly, a history of religious ideas and religious developements. The great intellects of all ages, have comprehended this truth; and though they differed about what religion is, or should be, yet they felt and saw, that to the world, it is in fact, every thing. In every nation, before these latter days of scoffing, the entire mass of men, though they saw not, felt the same truth; and hence, the vehement opposition in them all, to every change in their national faith. The sentiment uttered on this platform to-day, by the

chief magistrate of this commonwealth,* “That without the Bible this republic would never have existed ;” is as just, as it is emphatic. And I solemnly insist upon this inference, from that truth, that without the Bible this republic cannot continue. For the general principle contended for, has a most peculiar application to ourselves. Our institutions belong to an advanced condition of society ; they can be sustained only by a community, whose moral condition is as peculiar and as advanced, as their social system. This Bible contains the religion of this nation. This Bible which alone is able to prepare our children for virtuous and enlightened liberty ; which contains the sanction of our Creator to the principles of our polity, and throws the sacredness of religion around the simple, upright, humane and free spirit of our institutions ; this Bible which is of value to us, equal to the value of liberty and independence, merely because it contains our religion, and which has besides this inappreciable worth, that its religion is true and divine, and the only religion that is, either the one or the other ; this Bible which will perpetuate our glory, if that can be done at all,—and if it cannot will prepare our posterity to be and to do in the midst of all calamities, whatever becomes the worthy descendants of our glorious ancestors ; this treasure of all treasures, we dishonor and defile, by a deliberate act of national rejection !

No truth is more clearly established by the whole course of history, than that there is a wise and holy providence continually exerted over the nations of the earth. They rise, and flourish, and pass away under the eye, and by the purpose of him, who in the developement of his sublime proposals, will not allow them to abide in strength which would be used to his dishonour ; and who in pity to suffering man, will not permit the principles of evil to consolidate their force, and accumulate through successive ages, irresistible means to do wrong. Without the blessing and favour of God, no nation can stand, no people endure. Alas ! how multiplied, and how sad, are the evidences of this truth ! And how copiously has he taught us, that his blessing is to be expected only by the grateful and the obedient ; and that his favour is bestowed only as we walk in the ways directed by himself, and towards the ends which he proposes in his all pervading goodness ! But the revelation of his will, is contained most plainly, if not alone, in this blessed volume, which we dishonour by a great public act ; and the promises of his favour and protection, are written in those pages, which he has so urged, persuaded, commanded us to make the light of life, in every condition, every age, every relation and every office, through which his providence may guide us !—Oh ! blessed is that people, whose God, is the Lord !

* Governor Seward of New York.

It is not to be supposed, that such an event as the exclusion of the Word of God from popular education, could extensively occur, or continue for a considerable time without furnishing for itself, many pretexts, by which even good men might be beguiled: nor that such a calamity could be removed, without serious resistance, from many quarters. Several objections to the restoration of the scriptures to the schools, are so often urged, by persons deserving to be heard, that it seems necessary briefly to state and answer them.

Amongst these the most frequent, perhaps, are urged against the scriptures themselves; which it is alleged, are in many particulars, far above the comprehension of children and youth; and which are moreover so often disfigured by a certain plainness of expression, as to be unsuitable for promiscuous, or even public reading, before the young. To this, the first reply may well be, that God who created us, and who perfectly knows us, has judged otherwise; and that he made the volume of his word such as we have it, and has added the most express and emphatic commands, that it be early, constantly, publicly, promiscuously read. To all this he has joined the most precise assurances, that exact obedience to this precept, will have no other tendency, than to make us wise and pure here below, and blessed beyond conception, forever; that all manner of intercourse with him, and all communion with his holy word are most pure and most profitable: and that all contrary suppositions, are highly offensive to him, and full of dishonour to his infinite being.—As a second reply, it may be stated, with equal truth, that all experience proves the objection to be entirely mistaken. For of all mankind, the wisest, the purest, the best, were selected to write this sacred volume; and in all ages, the objectors themselves shall say, if this has not been eminently the character of those who have the earliest, the most thoroughly, and the most sincerely pondered, mastered, embibed, and rejoiced in its precious contents?—But as a final answer, it is to be considered, that if the objection have any weight, it will lie not only against the early and promiscuous study of the Bible; but also in a fundamental manner, first against the Christian religion itself, and secondly against all religion whatsoever—as being in itself too obscure for profitable study, and too immodest for public statement. For there are multitudes of truths which adult years do not unravel more than the simplicity of childhood; yea of truths which are the most vital in Christianity. And as religion in its largest sense, if it be true and profitable at all, must teach us what God is, and what he requires of us; it is manifest that an immense portion of it, treating of God, must be more or less inscrutable, and revealed merely as truths to be believed; while still larger portions, treating of duties, of sins, and of divine sanctions, touching both, must be always subject to such cavils, as that now confuted.

A second objection, which seems to be urged out of a spirit of amiable solicitude for the Bible itself; would exclude it from the course of systematic education, lest a too great familiarity with it, in early life, should disparage religion itself in our subsequent regards. This conceit is founded, in total ignorance of the human heart; and they who utter it overlook one of the firmest and most unalterable laws of our moral being. The objects which we cherish most fondly and mostly steadfastly, are those which first occupied our early and ardent thoughts. The spirit cherishes a kind of immortal gratitude, for that which made it first acquainted with itself, and revealed to it, all its strength. Our earliest associations are our most enduring ones. Our first friendships, are not only our sweetest—but as one by one they fail and pass away, we learn with surprised grief—that they are friendships which cannot be replaced. We make new friends, valued, dear, perhaps even more deserving; but alas! they are those we trusted first in childhood; not those whose images grew into the substance of our hearts. The deepest feelings of the human breast have been linked by God, in adamantine fetters, with the strong impressions and vivid remembrances, of our early years. The objects of that period, are the sacred objects of life; and the heart will not endure to have the meanest of them invested with less than the costliest of its treasures. Oh! that we could bind the early and tender affections, of the whole people, to the name of Christ, to the throne of God! Oh! that this fatal familiarity, with divine truth, were the universal heritage of the children of our country!—

There are those who make it a third objection, to restoring the Bible to the schools, that we have reason to dread great strifes, and permanent division amongst the friends of education, if not of religion itself, by pursuing this enterprize. It is to be feared, that many who call themselves the friends of education, are totally opposed to all religious influence, either in the school or the community; and there is too much reason to suppose, that plans are already extensively matured, whose success will exclude forever all moral instruction from the course of popular education. This branch of this great subject needs, and must receive, first or last, a thorough sifting. But this, is not the occasion. I will at present merely say, that manifestly, there can be no union of effort, between those friends of education who exclude from their system all moral training, and those who make conscience of taking the Bible to school with them; and the sooner the question is made between them at the bar of the public, the better for the country: for the question involved is no less than this, whether the education of a religious people, shall be subjected to an infidel or a Christian control. As it relates to the true friends of the Bible, there can be no cause—nor even occasion of strife, here. If there be one single point,

in which all true Christians can unite—it surely is this, that the word of God, should be given to the human race, and be received by it. Or if this may not be, it is the strongest possible proof, that there must be some inherent, or some providential hindrance, to all united action, amongst those who are earnestly contending for the same general object. This I do not believe. We shall find the Christians of this country, united, not divided by the present proposition; which while it may separate the friends of the Bible more widely from its enemies, will bind them more firmly to each other. For the rest—strifes and devisions, are the price we pay, for all that is precious in a sinful world. They can be no where better met, than under the shadow of the cross; no standard is more worthy to endure them under, than the banner of divine truth; no object can be set before us, for which we might better suffer them, than the charter of salvation.

Beloved brethren, friends of the Bible, and of the Lord Jesus, this is the instrument which God himself has provided, with which to subdue the earth unto himself, and triumph over sin and hell. Nothing can stand before a weapon whose edge has been tempered in heaven. It is our part to use this great weapon of our sacred warfare, this sword of the spirit of God—which we know to be, through him, mighty to pull down every strong hold of iniquity; to use it, as men who combat, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; yea as men who fight the good fight of faith, under the eye and guidance of Him, who has long ago openly triumphed over our stoutest enemies, and led captivity itself captive.

And why should doubts arise in our minds; or our faith or courage, for a moment, fail us? What has not the past witnessed? What victories of grace and redeeming love, has it not recorded? Let long history repeat. Time would utterly fail us, to speak of the triumphs of this blessed volume, in great antiquity; its triumphs while it was itself incomplete; the triumphs of all, even its smallest parts—each adding trophy upon trophy, as proofs of its own title, to be added to the portions that had come from the skies before it. How glorious, was its career throughout all the east—the great Shemite age—the early manhood of the world!—Then in the mighty transition age of the Greeks—Egypt and Asia surrendering civilization to Europe—Shem transferring the golden sceptre to Japhet—the light of the world only chased away the night, before the advancing radiance of the light from above!—Then came the mighty Cæsars victorious over all besides; and they, and Rome itself, subdued by three centuries of meek endurance, and uncomplaining martyrdom, sat down also at the feet of Jesus!—Its next trophies came from fierce barbarians, subdued by empires and by armies, rather than by single men; invading millions, the shadow of whose banners obscured the Roman world—as they descended like successive floods, over-

whelming every seat of civilization; savages who but for the the Bible, had sealed the doom of man.—Greater perhaps than all past, its achievements during the long night of the middle ages; that time and times, and the dividing of time, when all open sacrifice of praise seemed lost, and the weeping and bleeding church sat desolate in the great moral wilderness, listening in silence to the only voice that dared speak truth or utter comfort. Here is that voice; meek, but undismayed, as in those centuries of despair. Here are those witnesses; ready to speak, and die, and live again, as when the gloomiest sackcloth covered them.—But God heard their testimony, when man was deaf to their entreaties; and God restored again, as from the dead, his persecuted and corrupted church. The Reformation was in the strictest sense, accomplished by the Bible; and its great fruits, were the restoration of the Bible with its knowledge, liberty and righteousness to man.—Similar were the fruits of what men strangely call the great Rebellion of England; but which was in fact a rebellion *to* God and *against* iniquity; which has, until now, exerted so great an influence, over all the interests of the human race; and in the midst, and by the means, and through the agents and influences of which, the Bible had its golden age in England.—And last of all, amongst ourselves—amidst all the blessings we enjoy, and all the efforts we are making,—what Christian does not admit, that all, all are the fruits of the blessed word of God; of that word believed, obeyed, received into our hearts, and held forth in our lives!

And all these great successes, which the past records; all these victories which our eyes behold, are proofs to us, as from God himself—of what we might still achieve by the same living word. Let us not fear; let us not faint. Give us but the Word of God, and scope to spread and teach it; all else is sure. Let darkness revisit the earth; let error, ignorance, and superstition return; let the defeated enemies of truth and light, come forth and rule; set up your tyrants in the state, your bigots over the church; establish falsehood by the law, corrupt the ministers of truth, and burn once more its martyrs at the stake. Do this, and more; twice already, since Jesus bled, has it been done throughout the earth; yea done for long and bloody ages. And yet again, we look that such things shall be; for so God speaks. What then? Give us but the Bible, and we will purge your priesthood, dethrone your tyrants, defeat your bigots, put shame on error, and make again the martyr's blood, the church's seed! Give us the Bible—the Bible without note or comment—the Bible as God gave it! and we will with this alone, by God's indwelling grace, defy death and hell, and for the third time conquer the world for Christ!