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THE

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

IN A SERIES OF EIGHT LECTURES.

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SAINT LOUIS.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

KEITH & WOODS.

1855.

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PREFACE.

“THE LORD REIGNETH.” He who created this world and placed man upon it, proposed to accomplish great ends, worthy of Himself. He is now exercising a Providential control over individuals, and over nations, for the accomplishment of those ends. The time cannot be distant, when great changes are to take place amongst the nations. It is our wisdom, therefore, both to examine carefully and prayerfully the prophecies whose fulfilment is yet future, and to watch passing events, which throw light upon those prophecies. It is a great misfortune to mistake the character of the age in which we live, and to fail to understand the signs which God gives, that his people may act with Him their part.

The Lectures, which the author now ventures to offer to the public, excepting the Sixth, were delivered to his church, during the last winter, in the course of his regular ministrations. They were attended throughout by very crowded audiences; and many who sought to hear them, were not able to find seats, and were obliged to retire. The favor with which they were received, and the anxiety expressed by many at a distance to see them, have led to the conclusion, that the publication of them might perhaps contribute to the promotion of truth, and to the awakening of Christians to an appreciation of their responsibilities and their privileges in this eventful day. With the prayer, that the blessing of God may attend them, they are now placed before the public.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

LECTURE I.

The Approaching Epoch.

WE live in an eventful day. There is a general expectation of great changes in the moral, social and political conditions of mankind. It is both interesting and important to inquire, what changes “the signs of the times” indicate? The subject is one of vast extent, and attended with difficulties; yet, guided by the light of Divine truth, we may be able to determine with sufficient accuracy the direction in which human affairs are moving, and what must be the anticipated changes. Before entering upon the subject before us, I propose to state several important truths.

1. True religion is always substantially the same; yet every age has its peculiar phases, which, to a considerable degree, modify the duties and the interests of men. It is, therefore, important to understand the peculiar phases of our own age, that we may discharge our duties and protect our interests. There was a time, when the Jews in Babylon, were commanded to build houses, cultivate the soil, and pray for the peace of the city; and there was a time when God said to them, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence.” There was a time when it was

the duty of Christians to live and labor in Jerusalem for the conversion of their brethren, their kinsmen according to the flesh; and there came a time, when both duty and interest required them to hasten their flight from the devoted city. In both these instances those who failed to understand the signs of the times, paid dearly for their ignorance. So now, the peculiar condition of the world must give direction to the labors of the Church and of individual Christians. There have been times, when the chief duty of Christians seemed to be, to illustrate the excellency of the Gospel by patient suffering. We live in a day, when the providential call is for *activity*—for enlarged plans for the spread of the Gospel, vigorously carried out. We hear “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” and it becomes us to “bestir” ourselves.*

2. There are great epochs in the history of our world, when human affairs, or the affairs of a portion of the race, undergo radical changes, and start anew. The flood, the exode from Egypt, the destruction of Jerusalem and the seventy years of captivity, the advent of Christ and the final overthrow of Jerusalem, and the Reformation of the 16th century, were such epochs. And if the duty and the interests of men require them to study the peculiar phases of the age in which they live; it becomes specially important that those who live about the time of one of the great epochs in the world’s history, should correctly read the signs of the times. Happy would it have been for the Jews, had they seen in the advent of the Messiah, the day of their merciful visitation;

* 2 Sam. 5: 24.

and happy for those blinded by the delusions of Popery, had they heard the voice of God in the 16th century, saying, "Come out of her, my people."

3. The great epochs in the history of the world are preceded by a period of preparation; and their near approach is indicated by *signs*. Agitations and startling events, like the gathering of clouds and distant thunder before a storm, or the rumbling and shaking that precede an earthquake, proclaim them at hand, and warn men to be ready.

The deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage was preceded by increasing oppression and cruelty. God would make them weary of their degrading servitude, and cause them to feel their need of the aid of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." The command to slay all the male children was the filling up of the cup of Pharaoh's iniquity. "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." How striking the analogy between the condition of the Jews and that of multitudes now in Europe. From the prisons of Tuscany, of Italy, and Austria, God has heard the cries of his persecuted children. Nay—the blood of tens of thousands of martyrs, shed in past ages and in the present, cries to God for vengeance. God has heard, and he will come.

The destruction of Babylon was preceded by the increasing impiety and infatuation of the King and his nobles. It was distinctly indicated by the open-

ing career of Cyrus, at the head of the Medo-Persian army. The very man named a hundred years before, by Isaiah, as the destroyer of Babylon and the restorer of the Jewish state, was on his march. Meanwhile Daniel "understood by books the number of years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem;" and he set himself to pray and fast. The crowning act of wickedness on the part of the King, was the ordering of the sacred vessels of the Temple to be brought out to grace his bacchanalian feast. Then the mysterious hand wrote upon the wall his doom—and Babylon was taken.

The advent of Christ was heralded by prophetic signs. Daniel's seventy weeks were approaching their close. The sceptre had departed from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet. Cæsar's proclamation for the taxing of the whole world, compelled every Jew to feel that his nation was no longer free. The people, not only Jews, but Samaritans, so far correctly read prophecy and the signs of the times, that the expectation of the Messiah's advent was general. When the stirring voice of John the forerunner echoed through the wilderness, calling men to repentance, "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he was the Christ or not." Meanwhile the Holy Spirit had mercifully whispered to the aged and pious Simeon, "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." And Zachariah had seen a vision in the Temple, had received the promise of a remarkable child who should be great in the sight of the Lord, and was struck dumb. Impos-

tors, too, taking advantage of the signs and agitations, proclaimed themselves to be the expected Deliverer.

The destruction of Jerusalem was preceded by fearful signs. The alarming increase of wickedness, the internal divisions and cruel animosities; the mustering of the Roman armies for the conflict, fearful sights and voices—all proclaimed the near approach of the destruction of the city. Christians understood the signs, and saved themselves by timely flight. Not a disciple of Christ was found in Jerusalem, when the hour of its ruin came.

The Reformation of the 16th century was preceded by appropriate and significant signs. The revival of learning gave hope, that the dark ages were about to give place to increasing light. The minds of men were aroused from profound slumber to think and inquire. John Huss, in Bohemia, made his voice heard against the prevailing corruptions, and in favor of Gospel truth. And though the Council of Constance burned his body, they could not destroy the effects of his preaching. Wickliff, too, was heard in England, bearing a faithful testimony; and though he lived not to see the clear light of the Reformation, he did much to prepare the way for it. Meanwhile, the corruptions of Rome, seemed to increase with the increasing light. Never was the impious traffic in indulgences more shamelessly carried on, than by the famous Tetzal. The Reformation did not begin fairly, until the cry for reform rose from a thousand quarters.

4. The character of each epoch, is indicated by the character of the preparation, and of the signs. Those who witnessed the increasing oppression and

eruelty of Pharoah, and heard the bitter cries of the Jews, might easily have foretold, that the deliverance of the latter must be effected by terrific judgments on the former. The advent of Christ, on the contrary, was one of mercy. He came to be the light of the world. The signs, therefore, which indicated his advent, excited men to *inquire*, but did not threaten judgments. But when the time for the destruction of Jerusalem approached, every sign was terrific, tending not so much to excite inquiry after truth, as to point to an inevitable doom. The Reformation was preceded by a waking up of the minds of the people, and a seeking after religious truth. Thus it is clear, that God not only gives out signs of an approaching epoch, but that the character of the signs indicate the character of the anticipated changes.

5. The more important revolutions and changes in the condition of the nations, are but the fulfilling of God's purposes respecting His Church, and the evangelization of the world; and, therefore, it is impossible rightly to interpret them, without keeping prominently in view their moral and religious bearing. God, who created the world, and placed man in it, had great and wise designs to accomplish; and his providence is now developing and accomplishing those designs. When our Saviour, after his resurrection, was about to ascend to heaven, he said to his Apostles — “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, &c.” All authority was given to him as Mediator; and the great end of his mediatorial reign is to evangelize all nations. He is, therefore, “Head over all things to the church.” The rise, prosperity, decay, and fall of the Chaldean,

the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian, and Roman Empires, were foretold by the prophets, because of their connection with the Church of God. He used those great Empires for the accomplishment of his wise purposes concerning his Church. To those who see not the hand of God in passing events, the history of the world fails to teach its most instructive lesson; and the wise men of the world, who despise or overlook the Church of Christ in their estimate of either past or future events, will be, as they have so often been, confounded. To such men as Tacitus, the historian, it did not occur, that the Christian religion, of which he spoke so contemptuously, might overrun the Roman Empire, ascend the throne of Cæsar, and give coloring to all its future history. And if the world's wise ones had set themselves to inquire, in the 16th Century, whence would arise a power that would revolutionize the nations, and introduce a new era in their history; they would never have thought of a poor Augustinian monk, with the Bible as his only weapon, offensive and defensive. The politicians and statesmen who now speculate concerning the probable result of the present agitations in Europe, leaving out the purposes and prophecies of God respecting Christianity and the Church, will be greatly misled, and not a few of them overwhelmed.

For, this general truth, always important, assumes a special significancy, as the world approaches that period, now very near, when moral and religious principle is to be the controlling element in the progress of human affairs; and when the providence of God will bring to pass some of his grandest purposes. Worldly wisdom, always at fault in discerning the signs of the times, will be more and more confounded in these

last days. The Scriptures alone can unfold to us the glorious purposes of God respecting our world, and indicate the times when his providence and his Spirit will bring them to pass. “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

Keeping in view these important truths, I proceed to the proof of the following proposition:

The World is now rapidly approaching another great Epoch. The approaching epoch, too, if we except that of the advent of Christ, will be the most important in the history of our world. It will be marked by the overthrow of the great anti-Christian powers, the return of the Jews to their own land, and the rapid triumph of Christianity, introducing the glories of the Millennial day. I say nothing now, with regard to the question, whether Christ will reign in person on the earth, during the Millennium; although I am free to say, that I have seen in the Scriptures no conclusive evidence of the second advent before that happy period. In a succeeding lecture I propose briefly to state my views on this exciting subject, and the reasons for them.

In proof of the proposition just stated, the following considerations will probably be deemed sufficient:

1. We are near the close of a great prophetic period. The careful reader of the Scriptures must observe, that before the final triumph of the Gospel, a great anti-Christian power was to rise, flourish and be overthrown. Of this power the prophecies give the following particulars:

- 1st. It was to rise in the Roman Empire—the fourth beast in Daniel’s vision. This beast, possess-

ing irresistible power, destined to extend its conquests over the world, had ten horns, amongst which came up another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; “and behold in this horn were eyes, like unto the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.” These ten horns are explained by the angel to mean ten kings or kingdoms that should rise; and the little horn is explained to mean another that shall rise after them; “and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws.” This Kingdom “made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.”* This little horn is evidently identical with the beast which John the Apostle saw, “having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.—And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues, and nations.”

2nd. This anti-Christian power was to arise in the church of Christ, and claim Divine titles, honors and authority. To the Thessalonian Christians who were expecting the speedy advent of Christ, Paul said, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”†

* Dan. ch. 7. Rev. 13.

† 2 Thes. 2. Dan. 7, 26, 27.

3rd. This persecuting power was to continue for a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, and then to be destroyed. According to Daniel, it was to continue "until a time, times and the dividing of a time." According to John, "power was given unto him to continue forty and two months," or 1260 days. In prophetic language, each of these periods amounts to 1260 years.

4th. At the end of this period of 1260 years, God is to destroy this anti-christian power suddenly, and by very remarkable and terrible judgments; and then the Gospel is to spread with wonderful rapidity. "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

These and other similar prophecies the most judicious commentators and writers on prophecy, with remarkable unanimity, understand as relating to the church of Rome, with the Pope as its head. No other body in existence answers the prophetic description. Popery had its rise in the Roman empire, and subdued three of the ten kingdoms into which it was divided. It rose in the church of Christ, in consequence of a great falling away from the Gospel faith. The Pope claims blasphemous titles, and pretends to exercise the authority of God. He has made war against the saints, and worn them out by long continued persecutions and cruel tortures; and he is even yet persecuting them. The rise of Popery is fixed by the same writers in the year 606, when the Emperor Phocas

conferred on the Pope, the title of universal Bishop. He then claimed the right to tyrannize over the whole Church of Christ; and the civil head of the empire in which the apostacy rose, conceded the claim, and enforced it. If they are right in their interpretation, and in fixing the date of the rise of this great anti-christian power; its downfall must be nigh at hand. It is to continue 1260 years, which, added to 696, would place its downfall in the year 1866—only twelve years from the present moment! But since the apostacy arose *gradually*, it may not be possible to determine the precise time, when the 1260 years began, nor consequently when they will terminate. We may, however, approximate it.

The object of these lectures is not to go into any minute and labored examination of the prophecies; but, keeping in view the interpretation of the most judicious writers, to inquire whether “the signs of the times” indicate the correctness of that interpretation. If they have rightly understood the prophecies, as I believe they have, the world is certainly very near the termination of another most important prophetic period.

We will now take a rapid glance at the present state of the world, and endeavor to decide whether the indications are, that another great epoch is at hand.

2. The rapidity of travel, the consequent increase of intercourse between the different nations, and the amazing facility of communicating intelligence, have brought them so close together, and so united their interests, that whatever seriously affects the interests of one, is felt by all. A severe pressure in the monetary affairs of Great Britain, is immediately felt not only in Europe, but in America; and the rise or

fall in the price of articles of produce, immediately affects the interests of farmers and dealers in our own country. The same community of interests exists in the department of literature, science and religion. There is a constant and extensive interchange of books, periodicals and papers on all subjects; and the mails across the ocean are burdened with numberless letters. Even the rigid censorship exercised by some European governments over the press, cannot prevent the constant interchange of thought and feeling. In how short a period, for example, were the persecutions of the Madiai in Tuscany, known throughout Christendom; and when was there a time before, when the sufferings of two obscure persons would have excited so great sympathy, and called down on the heads of their persecutors such a torrent of indignant rebuke?

In past generations, great nations might go to war, without very seriously affecting the interests of other nations; and the commercial prosperity or embarrassments of one nation were but slightly felt by others. But that day is past. Americans from Boston to San Francisco, look with deep interest for every arrival from Europe; and arrivals from America are looked for with equal interest, on the other side of the ocean. Every nation in Europe, and our own nation is watching the progress of the eastern war with intense interest. Even China and Japan, so long almost isolated, now claim the attention and enlist the feelings of Americans and of Europeans.

This bringing of the nations of the earth into close proximity, and mingling their interests, is a providential arrangement, pregnant with great results. From the more enlightened, free and prosperous, light will be diffused through the darker masses, and

liberal principles will triumph, in spite of all the efforts of tyranny; and every important change will become universal in its consequences. This state of things evidently points to an epoch as nigh at hand, when great changes will occur in the condition of the nations.

3. The unprecedented rapidity of the progress of general education, and of science in all its departments, is of great significance. One important discovery has followed another in rapid succession, until men have come to regard these things almost as matters of course. The day for fine-spun theories is past; and now science, discovering and applying the laws of nature, ministers to the well-being of mankind. Besides, the different departments of truth are more or less nearly related to each other; and Christianity, the great reforming agent, is related to them all. In the progress of science, therefore, its claims to be a divine revelation have been severely tested, and consequently the more firmly established. This severe ordeal through which it is passing, is preparing it to put forth its full force in turning the world to God. Meanwhile, as the masses become intelligent, and accustomed to independent thought, they will better understand both their rights and their duties; and if grace be given, they will not only assert the former, but discharge the latter. Even now the earnest demand of individual rights, especially the right to think, speak and worship freely, is agitating the nations of Europe. The opposition of civil rulers, secular and ecclesiastical, may retard the progress of truth; but its triumph, which is inevitable, will be the more complete.

4. The universal expectation of great changes in the civil and religious state of the world, is one of the significant signs of the times. We live in a day of excitement. All Europe is one mighty volcano. The internal fires are burning fiercely; and at frequent intervals, the eruptions make the hearts of brave men quake. How sudden and how terrific was the revolution of '48! It commenced in France; but it spread like lightning from nation to nation. Kings and Emperors trembled on their thrones, nay, fled in trepidation from the excited people; and even he, who proudly proclaimed himself God's Viceroy, whose curse, in other days, filled great nations with alarm, fled like a trembling culprit in disguise, from his palace, and from "the eternal city." Nor did he mistake the temper of his people; for he returned to the pretended chair of Peter only at the point of foreign bayonets, and over the dead bodies of his own people!

The extent of the agitations demonstrated how deep and universal was the sense of wrong on the part of the people, and how general their determination to secure their rights. The Pope was saved by Napoleon; and Austria, by the Czar. There has been a reaction; but in this there is nothing discouraging. Infidelity was too much in the lead; and however successfully it may sometimes pull down that which is evil, it never builds up anything good. It is fitted only for destruction. The revolution fairly aroused the masses, and gave them an idea of their rights and of their power; but time was required for the increase of intelligence and moral principle. The reaction is giving the necessary time. But things have not settled down into permanent quiet. Ty-

rants do not think so. When you see an experienced sea captain making things fast about his ship with uncommon care, and with an anxious countenance, you readily conclude, that his practiced eye sees signs of a coming storm. Thus are the tyrants of Europe anxiously preparing for another uprising. Their efforts will prove ineffectual. They may even hasten the explosion; and they will certainly increase its violence. The people begin to understand their rights; they have demanded them, and will gain them. Every arrest, every imprisonment, every execution simply deepens the existing hatred of oppression.

But the general expectation of great revolutions indicates, that the signs of the times are significant and distinct. Never before was there a conviction so general, that wars and revolutions are inevitable.

5. The war now raging in the East, is one of the most significant signs of the times. Whatever may be the aims of the parties with whom it originated, its consequences, in the present state of Europe, cannot but become general in their extent, and momentous in their character. Its effects on Mahommedanism must be very decided, even resulting in its final overthrow. It places Romanism in a most critical position. The Pope is kept on his throne by France; but if France shall be obliged to employ all her forces in the existing war, what will prevent another revolution in Italy? Austria, which may be regarded as the chief dependence of Popery, already oppressed with a national debt of \$500,000,000, and constantly threatened with fearful internal convulsions, is between the belligerent parties, in such position, that, take which side she may, the danger is im-

minent. Meanwhile, she is obliged to exhaust her resources by keeping large standing armies—thus increasing taxation, and deepening the discontent and irritation of her subjects. The Greek church, too, must be seriously affected by the war, in what way and to what extent it may be impossible now to say. I shall return to this subject in another lecture. It is sufficient for my present purpose to show—that the signs of the times, as connected with the war, indicate the near approach of a great epoch.

6. The Revolution now progressing in China, must be regarded as one of the most remarkable and startling events of this eventful day. If one acquainted with the state of the different nations, had been asked to point out the nation which, in this day of change and of progress, would still slumber profoundly, he could probably have named China. Yet a revolution, commencing in a remote and obscure part of the empire, has steadily progressed, until its complete success is placed almost beyond doubt. The character of this movement is so peculiar, that it has arrested the attention of all Christendom. Every step of its progress is marked by the overthrow of idolatry; its chiefs acknowledge Christianity, and circulate the Scriptures and religious books. Mixed up with the religious views published, there is certainly a large amount of fanaticism or imposture. Widely different views have consequently been adopted by wise and good men, respecting the character and probable results of this revolution. One thing, however, is beyond a question, viz: the hand of God is in it; and He designs to overrule it for His own glorious ends. And the fact, that the leaders print and circulate the sacred Scriptures, affords ground of hope; for what-

ever may be their motives, and whatever errors they may have embraced, the minds of the people will be enlightened by the word of God.

In India, too, a great and happy revolution is silently progressing. The vast system of superstition, which, for so many ages, has darkened and degraded its millions, is evidently tottering to its fall. The Gospel and European civilization are melting it away. Missionaries, churches, schools, railroads, the telegraph, are all combining to introduce a new order of things.

This hasty and superficial survey of the present state of the world, leaves no room to doubt, that another great epoch is at hand. What changes we may anticipate, we shall inquire in succeeding lectures. The following conclusions are justified by the principles and facts, as here stated:

1st. We need, in this day, a thorough acquaintance with the word of God. In times of religious excitement, error in its most plausible forms uniformly appears. When the advent of the Messiah was anticipated, and the popular mind was in excited expectation, false Christs arose, and deceived many. And after His crucifixion, the unbelieving Jews, still expecting their Messiah, were repeatedly deluded by impostors. Against such our Savior warned His disciples, "For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many." And again, "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." The Reformation of the 16th century was afflicted and retarded by fanatical errorists, whose wicked follies and extravagances brought great reproach upon

the truth. Not, about the beginning of the present century, when a wonderful revival of religion spread over several of the Western States, the good work was soon marred by fanaticism. Not only did religious excitement exist to an intense degree, but nervous jirking and barkings began to prevail. Of that strange nervous agitation, I have seen no satisfactory explanation. Then arose the sect called New-Lights, which rejected the Divinity of Christ and the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and by which multitudes were deceived: and several ministers and a far greater number of laymen united themselves with that miserable sect of fanatics, the Shakers. Still more recently the Baptist church has been rent in twain by those who, under pretence of restoring the ancient order of things, have rejected some of the most important doctrines of Revelation. And now not a few are carried away by a fanatical Atheism, which, commencing with the mesmeric sleep and the absurdities of clairvoyance, pretends to get revelations from the spirits of diseased men and women. Even the grosser errors of Mormonism fail not to make converts in large numbers.

In such a day as this, there is no safety but in an intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, and experience of their power. The exhortation of the Apostle Peter applies in all its force to our day—"Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the errors of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It is the more important that we take heed to such warnings, because we are only at the commencement of

an excitement, which must rapidly increase in intensity; and with its increase, plausible and dogmatical errors will multiply. "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

2. The present age calls for enlarged and liberal views and great activity on the part of Christians. In the present excited state of the world, the progress of religious opinion must be rapid. Dangerous errors, therefore, must triumph, if the friends of the truth do not put forth the most vigorous exertion. The fields are white to the harvest, and the reapers must go forth to the work. This is no time for professing Christians to hoard up treasures, and fold their hands in idleness. In the apostolic age the liberality of the more prosperous churches was taxed to aid their suffering brethren. Now the call is, by means of the living ministry and the press, to send the bread of life to the millions who are calling for it. The hosts of light and darkness are mustering for the last great conflict. In such a cause and in such a time, who would not be a soldier? Who would shrink from enduring hardships? It is to this period that the wonderful vision of John the apostle refers—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a

vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Let every Christian gird himself for the conflict. Let him put on the whole armor of God. To engage in the great conflict now begun, which is to end in the triumph of truth, and in the glories of the millennial day, is an honor which angels might covet. Christian, are you prepared to act your part?

3. The signs of the times make a powerful appeal to the unconverted. There are times of ignorance at which God winks. There are periods when human affairs and the church of God move slowly. At such times, God may bear long with the impenitent. But when light breaks forth with unusual clearness, when a great work is to be speedily done, when the powers of darkness prepare for a determined resistance to the Kingdom of light; then does God most solemnly call on all men everywhere to repent. Then they who know their Master's will and do it not, incur aggravated guilt. At such times, men sin much, sin aggravatedly, and must expect to perish speedily. God now calls you to a great work, and to great honor. An appeal comes to you from the cross and from the mediatorial throne. Remember the curse of Meroz, the bitter curse, "because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." If the Psalmist, when he thought on his ways, "made haste" to keep the commandments of God; with what haste should the impenitent in this day make their peace with Him, and engage in the work to which He calls them.

LECTURE II.

The Downfall of Romanism.

IF one would decide whether the planets move, and if so, in what direction; he could not do so by gazing at them for a few moments. But by comparing their position in the heavens to-day with that which they occupied days or months ago, he might determine not only that they are not stationary, but in what direction they are moving. So he who would judge correctly of "the signs of the times," must not confine his view to the present day. But looking back to the last great epoch, and comparing the state of the world then with its state now, we can decide correctly in what direction and with what rapidity things have been and are moving. I propose, then, to point out very briefly the most important changes which have passed upon the moral, social and civil condition of mankind from the Reformation of the 16th century to the present time.

In the beginning of this discussion, I wish to call particular attention to an important and most significant fact, viz: The revolutions and changes of most importance from the Reformation to the present day, have not, as in preceding ages, been the results of individual or national ambition or covetousness, but of the working of *great principles*. They have been conflicts between truth and error, light and

darkness, popular rights and civil and ecclesiastical oppression. The Reformation itself announced those principles the results of which have been so great, and which promise to revolutionize the world. They are the following:

1. That, like the air we breathe, or the light of the sun, is *common property*; and therefore the right of every one to search for it, and to express and act upon his own conclusions, not interfering with the rights of others, is inalienable. On this principle is founded the claim to freedom of speech and liberty of the press. Intellectual belief is not the result of dictation, but of evidence. It is not produced by civil penalties, but by argument. Freedom of investigation, therefore, is essential to the progress and ultimate triumph of truth.

2. Every individual is accountable to God for his religious faith and his moral conduct. Therefore, it is both the *right* and the *duty* of every individual to form his own religious creed, and direct his own moral conduct, not interfering with the rights of others. Civil government is ordained of God, not to dictate religious faith, or to regulate religious worship, but to protect men in the enjoyment of their rights, both civil and religious. This great principle Luther fearlessly asserted before Charles V., and the Diet of Worms, in the presence of admiring multitudes, when he refused to retract the sentiments he had published, unless convinced by reference to the word of God. This same principle is recognized by the inspired Luke, when he commends the Bereans for testing the preaching of the Apostles by the Scriptures.

3. The whole Revelation of God, designed to in-

struct his people in faith and practice, is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

These great principles, consistently carried out, relieve the church and the world of civil legislation in religious matters. They deliver men from clerical dictation in matters of faith. They deliver the church from the accumulated traditions of ages, and place in her hand the pure word of God. They are so evidently true, that, once announced to men aroused to think, they must ultimately triumph. That they have not always been consistently carried out by Protestants, must be admitted. If they had been, the church of Christ would not have been corrupted and cursed by church establishments, as in England, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, &c. It requires time for good men to throw off the prejudices of past years. Even the Apostles of Christ did not at first understand the extent of their commission. Yet from the period of the Reformation to the present day, these principles have been struggling for the ascendancy. They are now agitating all Europe.

To these principles, Popery and civil rulers have opposed force. The civil arm, aided and encouraged by the Popes, aimed to crush them, while the Reformation was yet in its infancy. The power of Philip II., of Spain, and the terrors of the Inquisition, protected Spain and Italy against them. The St. Bartholomew massacre and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were designed to annihilate them in France. The long and terrible war in which Holland and the United Provinces achieved their independence of Spain, and the invasion of England by the Spanish Armada, were but the desperate struggles of Rome to banish

these principles from the earth. The history of England and Scotland from the Reformation to the reign of William and Mary, is little more than the record of the struggles of noble men to secure to themselves and to posterity their inalienable rights. The existence of these United States, as a free nation, results from the working of the same principles. Here they have been fully recognized, and have borne their legitimate fruits. The French revolution, too, was the result of the operation of great principles; but they were the principles of an atheistic philosophy, false in its fundamental principles — a philosophy which degraded men to the level of mere animals. Nay, they sunk lower still: for, having taken leave of reason, they were animals without even the instincts which guide other animals.

In all these conflicts ambition and avarice undoubtedly had their full share. Nevertheless it is true, that they were the struggles of great principles for the mastery. Before considering the past results of these conflicts, and those which are yet future, it will be instructive to take a view of the respective parties, in the commencement of the struggle, and of the advantages and disadvantages of each. On the one hand, Rome had—

1. Her claim to a venerable antiquity. It is not without great struggles that men can prevail on themselves to abandon opinions held sacred through many generations. It seems to many almost sacrilege to so far question their truth, as to enter upon an investigation. Whatever power there is in this claim to antiquity, Rome seemed to the multitudes to possess it.

2. Rome had the claim, long admitted, to infallibility and the power of the Keys. The people had

been accustomed to regard the decisions of Popes and councils, as dictated by the Holy Spirit; and they had not known how the door of heaven could be opened to them, but by the clergy in the confessional. Spurious miracles without number had heightened the superstitious fear of their anathemas, and strengthened the faith of the people in the virtue of masses and Indulgences.

3. Rome had undisputed possession of all the institutions of learning, and was identified with the reigning philosophy; and the entire literature of Christendom was baptized with her spirit. Whatever else the young might learn, they were taught to receive without question the dogmas of Rome, and to bow reverently to the authority of "the Vicar of Christ" and his clergy, who proclaimed themselves "gods on earth."

4. Rome abounded in wealth. Her treasures had accumulated for centuries. A large portion of the landed estate in every country belonged to her clergy. They had grown rich by impoverishing the people; and to touch their treasures, was sacrilege.

5. Rome had for her support the power of the civil arm. Charles V., Frances I. and Henry VIII—the three most powerful princes on earth, were obedient sons of the Pope, ready to do his bidding. Charles V. sought to crush the Reformation in its infancy by the power of the sword; Henry VIII. wielded his pen as well as the sword in defence of the faith. In a word, Rome had possession of the whole field with all the means necessary to retain it.

What had Protestantism? *It had the Bible and its prayers.* With these it went forth to the fearful conflict. Instead of crucifixes, relics and charms, Protestantism held up a crucified Savior, and invited

men to believe and be saved. The Bible, though so long buried beneath the rubbish of human traditions, had lost nothing of its freshness and its power. It was still "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." In the hands of Luther, Calvin, Zuingle and their noble co-laborers, it wrought wonders, whilst it alarmed and confounded its powerful enemies. The Reformation in its onward progress defied alike the arguments and the arms of its enemies. It met them on the platform of public debate and on the field of battle; and after a fierce conflict of thirty years, Rome was compelled to allow liberty of conscience to those whom she could not subdue. The treaty of Passaw, which secured to Protestants toleration, was made in the year 1552.

Hugh Miller, editor of the *Edinburgh Witness*, presents the following view of the two parties, Papist and Protestant, as they stood a little later in the 16th century:

"They did not stand abreast, be it observed. The several competitors in this high race did not start on equally advantageous terms. The rich and powerful nations declared for Popery and arbitrary government; the weak and third rate ones for Protestantism. On the one side stood Spain, then at the head of Europe—rich in arts, in military glory, in the genius and chivalry of its people, in the resources of its soil, and the mistress, besides, of splendid colonies. By her side stood France—the equal of Spain in arts, in civilization, and in military genius, and inferior only to her proud neighbor in the single article of colonies. Austria came next, and then Italy. Such were the illustrious names ranged on one side. All of them

were powerful, opulent, highly civilized, and some of them cherished the recollection of imperishable renown, which is a mighty power in itself. We have no such names to recount on the other side. Those nations which entered the list against the others were but second and third rate powers; Britain, which scarce possessed a foot-breadth of territory beyond her own Island—Holland, a country torn from the waves—the Netherlands and Prussia, neither of which were of much consideration. In every particular the Protestant nations were inferior to the Papist nations, save in the single article of their Protestantism; nevertheless that one quality has been sufficient to counterbalance, and far more than counterbalance, all the advantages possessed by the others. Since the day we speak of what a different career has been that of these nations. Three centuries have sufficed to reverse their position. Civilization, glory, extent of territory, and material wealth, have all passed over from one side to the other. Of the Protestant nations, Britain alone is more powerful than the whole of combined Europe in the sixteenth century.”

Let us take a nearer view of Papal Europe, and see how its strength has withered, and its glory departed since the Reformation. Spain was protected against the powerful principles of Protestantism only by the horrid cruelties of the Inquisition, sustained by Phillip II. Rev. J. Balmes, an able Spanish writer, whose work has been translated and published by the Papists in this country, says—“We do not fear to assert, that the introduction of Protestantism into that country, was imminent and irresistible without the system which he (Phillip) pursued. Whether Phillip used the Inquisition for political purposes in certain

cases, is not the question we have to examine here; but at least it must be acknowledged that it was not a mere instrument of ambitious purposes; it was an institution strengthened and maintained in presence of an imminent danger. It appears from the proceedings of the Inquisition, at this time, that Protestantism began to spread in an incredible manner in Spain; eminent ecclesiastics, monks, seculars of distinction, in a word, individuals of the most influential classes, were attached to the new errors."* Thus Balmes, in defending the cruelties of Phillip, exposes the imbecility of Popery, which could not withstand the moral power of Protestantism.

Spain was, at this time, in the climax of her glory. "No European prince," says Russel, "ever possessed such vast resources as Phillip II. Besides his Spanish and Italian dominions, the Kingdom of Portugal and the Netherlands, he enjoyed the whole East India commerce, and reaped the richest harvests of the American mines."† In the height of his ambition and in the warmth of his religious zeal, Phillip formed the resolution, in the reign of Elizabeth, of subduing England. Immense preparations were made. "In all the parts of Sicily, Naples, Spain and Portugal, artizans were employed in building vessels of uncommon size and force; naval stores were bought up at great expense; provisions amassed; armies levied and quartered in the maritime provinces, and plans laid for such an embarkation as had never before appeared on the ocean. The military preparations in Flanders were no less formidable. Troops from all quarters were every moment assembling to reinforce the duke

* Prot. and Cath. compared, p. 211.

† Mod. Europe, vol. 5, pp 31, 32.

of Parma, who employed all the carpenters he could procure, in building flat-bottomed vessels to transport into England an army of thirty-five thousand men, assembled in the Netherlands."‡ Thus was fitted out "the invincible Armada," which at one blow was to decide the fate of England. "The success of the enterprise was never called in question; so that several Spanish and Italian noblemen embarked as volunteers, to share the glory of so great a conquest." The Armada appeared in the British channel, consisting of one hundred and thirty vessels, disposed in the form of a crescent, stretching the distance of seven miles. The hearts of brave men trembled for the fate of England. But the Lord reigneth. "The invincible Armada" suffered a severe defeat; and in their retreat, while passing the Orkneys, they encountered a violent storm in which many of the vessels were wrecked. Not one half the fleet returned to Spain. Here in the efforts to sustain Popery by the sword, the glory of Spain suffered an eclipse; and from that day to this her career has been downward. After a terrible struggle, she lost the Netherlands, A. D. 1598; and in 1609, after a long and wasting war, she was compelled to abandon her claims to Holland, which, even during the war, had become rich and powerful. Not content with the folly and wickedness by which she had lost so much, Spain banished at one time a million of Moors, who were amongst the most industrious inhabitants. They were professed Papists; but lack of confidence in their sincerity led to the cruel decree.

Look now at Spain, once the most zealous and powerful supporter of Rome. In the very effort

‡Ibid p 29.

to uphold Popery, she began to sink. If she excluded Protestantism by the horrid cruelties of the Inquisition, she did not exclude infidelity. Indeed the very methods urged by the clergy to prevent the spread of Protestantism, exposed the weakness of Popery as a system of religion, and drove reflecting men to infidelity. She lost successively Portugal, her American colonies and her East India commerce; and finally she lost internal peace. Cursed with mental stagnation, because men dared not think, overrun with a multitude of idle and immoral ecclesiastics, her agriculture, manufactures and commerce steadily declining, she seemed "smitten with palsy." And within the last twenty years, she has been desolated by one of the most ferocious civil wars that ever disgraced a civilized nation. The very foundations of government and of society have been unsettled. Revolution succeeds revolution, shedding torrents of blood, and leaving things in a worse state than before. There is not virtue enough amongst the degraded people to lay the foundations of a stable government. Poor Spain! once the admiration of all Europe, she has sunk into utter contempt—none fear or respect her. Her Popish faith has been her ruin; nor can she rise, till she turns from it to the word of God. England once trembled at the prospect of a Spanish invasion. She would now laugh at the idea of an attack from the same quarter.

Just now there appears to be some ground of hope for Spain. A new constitution has been presented to the Chambers, which, whilst it recognizes Popery as the religion of the State, protects the rights of conscience and the freedom of the press. This movement in the right direction indicates the overthrow of

the power of the Pope and his clergy. In every conflict in Spain, as everywhere else, they have been most fully identified with intolerant and persecuting principles. The people of Spain begin to see the great cause of their degradation; and they seem resolved to remove it. Protestantism, with the Bible in her hand, we may now hope, will go forth untrammelled to elevate and bless degraded Spain. If she does not recede from the position which, after so many terrible struggles, she seems disposed to take; a brighter day is before her. Certainly the present movement in the right direction must be regarded as one of "the signs of the times."

What is true of Spain, is true, to a great extent, of every Romish country in Europe. What is Portugal more than Spain? What is Italy with its poor, degraded States, in constant danger of revolution? Austria, the main dependence of Rome, burdened with an enormous national debt, in constant apprehension of civil commotions, obliged to keep large standing armies, standing in a most perilous position between Russia and the Western powers, can do nothing for Rome. Cast your eye over the map of Europe, and see if there is one nation or government to which Popery can look for support.

There is France, it is true; and her history, in connection with Christianity, is an instructive one. By the St. Bartholomew massacre, in 1572, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, Rome thought to supply her lack of argument. If she could not convince Protestants by her arguments, nor prevent them from convincing others, she could butcher them, and thus regain her lost supremacy. What was the result? When a low materialistic philosophy arose,

and spread rapidly through all the educated classes, and then penetrated the masses of the people, she had no moral power to oppose to it. Nay, her appeals to the civil arm to protect her faith, and her abominable cruelties, proclaimed the imbecility and the corruption of that faith, and, connected with the gross immoralities of her bishops and priests, furnished infidels with their most potent appeals, and filled the hearts of the people with bitter hatred. The terrific storm of the Revolution, with its horrid cruelties, was the legitimate consequence of the previous state of things. The windows of heaven were opened to pour down wrath, and the fountains of the deep were broken up:—and the world trembled to see a great nation turned into a pandemonium.

The fearful fruits of infidelity caused a reaction; and Napoleon condescended to restore the Pope to his position, after having effectually humbled him; but from that day to this, France has been more infidel than Romish. In the history of France, as in that of Spain, we see how God in his Providence punishes those who persecute his people, and would propagate fatal error by the sword. In both, the Pope and his clergy have reaped the bitter fruits of their own doings.

When Napoleon III. usurped the crown of France, a shout of joy was heard throughout the Romish camp. Why? Had Papists been deprived of the rights of conscience in France? They had not. What, then, had they to gain by the elevation of Napoleon? Unable to stop the progress of Protestantism by moral means, the clergy hoped to see the sword of persecution unsheathed again. The Shepherd of the Valley, the organ of the Archbishop of

St. Louis, announced with an air of triumph, that the very semblance of a Republic is destroyed in France. The leading republicans are banished for life from French soil. Napoleon is no longer *M. le President*, but *mon Prince, Liberte, Fraternite, Egalite*, is erased from the coin and from the public monuments, and, at the end of High Mass, it is no longer *Domine, salvum fac Republicanam*, but *Domine, salvum fac Napoleonum*, that they chant." The same article said, "We suppose that every intelligent Catholic throughout the world was, on the whole, pleased, when the news of the recent stroke of State in France first reached his ear." And again, "We admire the course of Napoleon so far; we do not condemn his arbitrary measures." But why all this joy at the establishment of a military despotism in France? The Archbishop's paper does not leave us in the dark on this point. It tells us, Catholics "may with reason hope, that the Catholic church and the Catholic Religion will soon again be recognized as the sole religion of the State, heresy discountenanced, and heretical sects, if tolerated, at least no longer supported by the State." Just here let me ask, are men who entertain the sentiments here expressed, the friends of American liberty?

But the *Paris Univers*, the leading Romish Journal in France, was even more bold in its avowals. It said—"A heretic examined and convicted by the Church used to be delivered over to the civil authorities and punished with death. Nothing has ever appeared to us more rational or more necessary. More than 100,000 persons perished in consequence of the heresy of Wickliffe; a still greater number by that of John Huss; it would not be possible to calculate

the bloodshed caused by the heresy of Luther; and it is not yet over. After three centuries we are on the eve of a re-commencement. The prompt repression of the disciples of Luther, and a crusade against Protestantism, would have spared Europe three centuries of discord and catastrophes, in which France and civilization may perish."

Napoleon, it was ardently hoped, would not only do the will of the Pope in persecuting his Protestant subjects, but would invade and conquer England—the bulwark of Protestantism in Europe. The Freeman's Journal, Archbishop Hughes' organ, proclaimed how many Papists would pray for Napoleon, if he would make war upon England. But these cherished hopes have been, so far, sadly disappointed. France and England are allies in a war against Russia, the power by which the liberties of Hungary were crushed in favor of despotic Austria. Meanwhile, Protestantism is steadily gaining in France, in spite of the efforts of the priests to stop its progress by petty persecutions. The signs of the times indicate, that France will not again unsheath the sword in favor of Popery. Napoleon evidently has no very ardent religious zeal, but will use the Pope as far as he can make him available for ambitious purposes.

Let us now take a survey of the American continent, and see how far things in our own hemisphere favor Popery. In Mexico and South America, Romanism has had the fairest opportunity to demonstrate its power to elevate the ignorant and degraded, and to place itself on a firm basis. It began its work with the first discovery of the American continent. What has been the result? It has lost a large portion of the territory it once occupied. Mississippi,

Louisiana, and Florida, three flourishing Protestant States have been organized on territory possessed, a few years ago, by France and Spain. The States of Texas and California, together with the territory of New Mexico, occupy ground taken but yesterday from Mexico; and that Republic itself has been for years agitated by perpetual civil wars. Its inhabitants, ignorant, poor, degraded, are the sport of aspiring demagogues. There is neither the intelligence nor the virtue to sustain a free government; nor is it possible to establish over the turbulent masses a despotism. The Church is immensely rich; the people wretchedly poor. A grossly immoral and licentious clergy lead the way to the cock-pit, the gaming table, and to places of more degraded character. Mexico, cursed with a demoralizing superstition, is fast exhausting her resources, and seems on the borders of hopeless ruin.

What is true of Mexico, is substantially true of all the Republics of South America. The news of civil wars and revolutions amongst them, surprises no one, and scarcely arrests the slightest attention. Yet in some of these Republics there are signs of regeneration. Two or three of them have established liberty of conscience and of the press. They have taken this step, too, in the face of the Pope's remonstrances and anathemas, and have banished bishops who refused to submit to the laws of the land.

It is a fact that ought to arrest universal attention, that Popery has impoverished, demoralized, degraded and ruined every country on the globe, where, during the last three centuries, it has had exclusive sway. There is not one exception. Yet in climate, soil and natural resources, many of those countries are excell-

ed by no others. For their present degradation and internal discord no other cause than the influence of Popery has existed. It would be easy to demonstrate that such are its legitimate and necessary fruits. And, therefore, to the extent of its prevalence in our country, its prosperity must be retarded.

It is a most significant fact, that whilst Popery has ruined every country where it has prevailed, it has almost wholly failed, since the Reformation, in propagating itself in pagan countries. Rome has sent her missionaries in all directions, to India, Japan, China, Africa, and America; and at times, as when the celebrated Francis Xavier went to India, she has boasted of wonderful success; but the result has proved, that her missionaries have baptized pagans without converting them. Balmes, the Romish writer already quoted, draws a humiliating contrast between the triumphs of Christianity amongst pagans in the earlier ages, and the imbecility of Romanism during the last three centuries. He says—“Christianity [i. e. Popery] in modern times has been in possession of the exclusive empire of Europe; and yet she has not been able to succeed in introducing herself again on the coasts of Africa and Asia, which lie under her eye. It is true, that the greatest part of America is become Christian; but observe, that the nations of those countries have been conquered; there the conquering nations have established those governments which have lasted for ages; the European nations have inundated the New World with their soldiers and colonies, so that a considerable portion of America is a kind of importation from Europe; consequently, the religious transformation of that country does not resemble that which took place in

the early ages of the Church. Turn towards the West, where European arms have not obtained a decided preponderance; see what takes place there; the nations are still under the yoke of false religions. Christianity has not been able to enlighten them: although the Catholic missions have obtained the means of founding a few establishments more or less considerable, the precious seed has not been able to take sufficient root in the soil, in order to bear the fruits which ardent charity hoped for, and heroic zeal labored to produce. From time to time, the rays of Divine light have penetrated to the heart of the great Empires of Japan and China; at certain moments flattering hopes might be conceived: but these hopes have been dissipated, these rays of light have disappeared like a brilliant meteor amidst the darkness of midnight.* This writer, an able and zealous defender of the Church of Rome, confesses that her missionary enterprizes, except as they have been sustained and promoted by war, have proved a failure; and even where they have succeeded by such means, as in Mexico and South America, the most deplorable state of things now exists. The Romish priests followed Protestant missionaries to the South-Sea Islands; but except so far as they have gained power by the arms of France, their success has been contemptible.

Now look at Protestant missions in contrast with those of Rome. In every pagan country, the different evangelical denominations have established schools, planted churches, translated and published the Bible, together with tracts and books. Steadily have their

* Prot. and Cath. pp. 264, 265.

missionaries gone forward in the midst of difficulties, discouragements and sufferings. In India, China, Turkey, Africa, the South-Sea Islands, amongst the American Indians—everywhere their missions are found, and almost everywhere flourishing and wielding a powerful influence. The Sandwich Islands, raised within forty years from the deepest degradation, are now a civilized, enlightened, Christian nation, prepared, if Providence so order, to take its place as one of the United States. The Republic of Liberia, with its free institutions, its churches and its schools, is another of the glorious results of Protestant enterprise. Nay more—our own great and free Republic stands before the world the result of the working of Protestant principles. Mexico and South America show, in strong contrast, the workings of Popery.

If Romanism has proved itself powerless to convert pagans, its success in countries where Protestantism prevails, has not been very cheering to its friends. In several ways it has gained something in our own country. By multiplying its schools, especially female schools, it has been able to allure into its fold many young persons. An occasional conversion of an Episcopal preacher has crowned its efforts; and emigration from Europe has added many thousands to its numbers. But this emigration, whilst it has added no real strength to the Church of Rome, has seriously injured it in several ways.

In the first place, it has made an exhibition of ignorance and immorality not at all calculated to convert the enlightened people of this country. The drunkenness, the profanity, the Sabbath-breaking, the riots, of which the children of “holy Mother”

have given us so many exhibitions, have added nothing to her good name. They have served to convince thinking men, not only that her claim to infallibility is false, but that her faith is essentially corrupt.

Besides, not a few of those emigrating to this enlightened country, have abandoned the superstitions of Popery, and either gone into the world, or embraced a more rational faith. The number of apostacies from Rome, there is reason to believe, has far exceeded the number of converts to her. Alarming losses in this way have been acknowledged and lamented by the Romish clergy.

Of those who retain their standing in the Church of Rome, many have become so far Americanized and Protestantized, as to give their clergy serious trouble. The truth of this statement is sufficiently proved by the frequent contests which have recently occurred between the priesthood and their flocks, concerning church property. Several of these cases have come under the cognizance of the civil courts.—And in one instance, neither the authority of the Pope's Nuncio, nor the bishop's excommunication could subdue the rebellion. The decline of priestly authority is further evinced by the number of Romanists who persevere in sending their children to our excellent Common Schools, in the face of the denunciations of their spiritual guides.

And if many emigrants to this country have abandoned Romanism, and many more have become rebellious; it is still more emphatically true, that the rising generation, breathing from infancy a Protestant atmosphere, are likely to be but lukewarm Papists, even if they do not become Protestants.

To a considerable extent, similar statements may be

made respecting Popery in Great Britain. There a large number of clergymen from the Episcopal Church have passed over to Popery; but, on the other hand, its losses in Ireland have been very great. Parts of Ireland, almost depopulated by the famine and by emigration, are being filled by a thriving Protestant population; and not less than thirty thousand persons, it is stated on good authority, have been converted to Protestantism.

Not only is it true, that Popery has, for three centuries, failed to propagate itself, whilst it has degraded, impoverished and ruined every nation where it has prevailed; but it has, to a great extent, lost its power over its own adherents. Time was, when the contending powers of Europe regarded it as of the first importance to propitiate the Pope. His decision swayed the minds and directed the passions of the multitude. His interdict or his anathema filled their minds with superstitious terror. Now, when all Europe is agitated by wars and rumors of wars, no one cares to inquire where Pius IX. stands. Supported on his tottering throne by the arms of France, his power, whether secular or religious, is despised. Civil Rulers, ever watchful of all forces which may work for or against them, have become satisfied that the Pope's blessing cannot help them, nor his anathema hurt them. The masses of the people have ceased to tremble at the thunders of the Vatican. Even in the terrible civil wars of Spain, of Portugal, and of Mexico, the voice of the "holy father" is unheeded, whilst his children rush to the deadly conflict, and *Catholic brethren* spill each other's blood in torrents! Even the feeble Republics of South America, as they abolish their intole-

rant laws, treat with contempt the remonstrances and menaces of "his holiness." Surely there has occurred a fearful decay of the faith even of Papists themselves, the world over.

Will the Church of Rome rise again to power? or is her speedy overthrow certain and inevitable? What do the signs of the times indicate? The following considerations may aid us in answering these questions, viz.:

1. Rome has confessed before the world her inability to contend *by argument* against Protestantism. As we have seen, Rev. J. Balmes confesses, that, but for the terrors of the horrid Inquisition, Protestantism would have overrun both Spain and Italy. The most atrocious persecutions only have served to keep it down in France. And now in Tuscany and throughout Italy, the civil authorities, under the influence of Popery, are constantly on the watch for the purpose of arresting and punishing every Bible-reader and every distributor of books or tracts. Why, if Rome has truth and argument on her side, does she tremblingly invoke the civil arm to protect her faith against the assaults of Protestantism. Why does she fill her dungeons with men and women, who dare to question her infallibility?

Happily we live in an age of inquiry. Men begin to believe that truth is mighty, and can successfully cope with error. They begin, consequently, to feel a sovereign contempt for a system of religion claiming to be of God, which can maintain its hold upon the minds of men only by the terror of prisons and tortures. The course pursued by the Church of Rome for centuries, is a public confession of her imbecility, and consequently of the falsity of her

faith. The day has passed forever when the human intellect would blindly submit to a faith *dictated*, but not *proved*.

2. Romanism has abundantly born its fruits, and they have shown its true character. The connection between religious truth and virtue are intimate and essential. Error, embraced and acted out, never produced a virtue. Truth, never produced anything else. The principle — “By their fruits ye shall know them” — commends itself to the common sense of men. No reflecting mind can believe in the divine origin of any system of religious faith, which sinks its advocates and subjects into mental and moral degradation. Nay, more — no religious belief can ever establish its claim to be from Heaven, unless it can and does elevate, purify and bless those who embrace it. True religion promotes the best interests of men, individually and socially. Christianity promises to do this; but if Romanism is Christianity, it has failed to fulfil its promises. Look at every country where Popery prevails. The people are ignorant and immoral, thriftless and poor; and the country agitated by civil disorders. What has produced this state of things? Has Protestantism entered there? Has heresy infected the people? No — the masses are Papists; and the purest morality is found amongst those who have renounced Popery. The clergy themselves are far from being exempt from the general change. As a body, they are licentious and immoral.

Popery has proved itself as incapable of sustaining civil government, as of promoting intelligence and virtue. It has fitted no nation for self-government. It has sustained itself, as long as possible,

by despotism, and ended in anarchy. Its fruits prove it not only false, but mischievous; and, therefore, it is not only disbelieved, but detested. It is hated the more, because its pretensions to holiness are prominent in proportion to its corruptions. Popery has the less chance to retrieve its character, because its fruits now stand forth in striking contrast with those of Protestantism. In everything which makes a people intelligent, virtuous, free, prosperous and happy, Protestantism has demonstrated its immeasurable superiority. Compare Great Britain and the United States with any Romish country on the globe, and say whether it is not so.

3. Romanism now stands before the world, identified with despotism, and warring against the inalienable rights of men—the uncompromising enemy of civil and religious liberty. In Rome itself the Inquisition, the most diabolical of all institutions, driven from every other place, finds a home. The pretended Vicar of the Prince of Peace sustains it; whilst the sighs, tears, and groans of innocent men and women cry to Heaven for vengeance. In our own day, its horrid dungeons have been thrown open; and we have shuddered, as we read the revolting disclosures. Tuscany has gained a world-wide, but most unenviable celebrity by the imprisonment of Madiari, Miss Cunningham and others. Austria, aided by despotic Russia, has set her foot on the neck of Hungarian liberty. But why look we to Europe to learn the true character of Popery. Even in our own country the most intolerant doctrines have been published by leading Romish journals. The dark ages can produce nothing worse. At the same time, a concerted attack was made in every part of the United States upon

our Common Schools. Never was there greater infatuation. Their wonted wisdom forsook the priesthood. They astonished the American people by avowing principles they had heretofore professed to detest, and divulging aims they had studiously concealed. Meanwhile the riots gotten up by foreign Papists in our principal cities, for the purpose of preventing the discussion of the principles of Popery, brought Americans to feel that the time for action had come. A public sentiment against Popery has thus been formed, which an age would not suffice to change. Its influence in our country is well nigh destroyed. Unprincipled politicians have more to lose than to gain by courting it. In Great Britain a similar, though perhaps less extensive, revolution in public sentiment has occurred. It requires no prophet to foresee, that ere long the principles of civil and religious liberty will triumph. The people in Europe as well as in America begin to understand their rights; and agitation will not cease, till they secure them. But Rome cannot change her ground. Her doctrines and her own application of them are published to the world. Her claim to infallibility must be maintained; or she is ruined. The triumph of liberty, therefore, must be her overthrow. She must push the world back into the night of the dark ages; or the world will crush her, as the most malignant enemy of popular rights.

4. The efforts of Rome to crush the spirit of liberty, and to perpetuate the reign of ecclesiastical and civil despotism, will hasten her overthrow, and make it more terrible. The spirit of inquiry which now prevails in all Romish countries, renders it absolutely necessary, either to grant freedom of opinion,

or to execute the intolerant laws with more severity. The former, Rome will never consent to do ; and in the attempt to do the latter, she gives additional strength to the hatred of her tyranny, which now burns in the bosoms of the people. It was in the reign of James II., of England, that tyranny and intolerance reached their climax ; and his flight, the necessary result of his tyranny, gave to England the liberty she now enjoys. A similar, but more dreadful fate awaits Rome. The light is now pouring into her dark dominions from all Protestant countries ; and the people are beginning to be fully aware that their poverty and degradation are to be attributed mainly to the Pope and his clergy. The revolution of '48 was but the premonitory movement. The next uprising of the people will be followed by no such reaction.

5. Meanwhile Protestant States are flourishing, and extending their influence ; Protestant missions are moving forward with unceasing energy ; and Protestant principles are rapidly gaining ground in Romish countries, in France, in Austria, in Tuscany, in Italy. In the midst of the darkness and tyranny of Popery, stands Sardinia with her free principles, affording protection to the long persecuted Waldenses ; whilst they are zealously proclaiming the pure Gospel, and gaining converts from Rome.

Will Rome regain her lost dominion by *argument* and *moral power*? Her dark history and her bitter fruits afford a conclusive answer to all her arguments. Will she rise by the power of *the sword*? Who will help her? Can Spain, poor degraded Spain, come to the rescue? She would not, if she could. Is Austria, distracted by internal commotions, and

involved in the great war, able to help her? Will France, in which Protestantism and infidelity so divide the people, and which is now an ally of Protestant England, propagate Popery by the sword? Will the Pope look for help to his own dominions, where foreign bayonets only can retain for him his throne? No—Rome cannot rise by moral power; and she cannot rise by the sword.

Can Rome maintain her present position? Will not the spirit of inquiry still extend through her dominions? Outside of Rome, she cannot call the Inquisition to her aid. The people will have the Bible and religious books, and will think for themselves; and malignant infidelity—caused by the wickedness of the Pope and his clergy, will take revenge. Do not the signs of the times indicate the speedy and terrible overthrow of Popery? Is not this event likely to occur between the present year and the year 1866? I have said, that we probably cannot fix the precise date. We may approximate it; and the signs of the times will aid us.

The facts now stated seem to warrant the following conclusions, viz.:

1. The past history and the present condition of Popery afford a striking proof of the inspiration of prophecy. The inspired writers described its character, and traced its history with wonderful accuracy. It has now lived almost through its 1260 years; and its present condition warrants the conclusion, that its downfall is at hand, and that terrific judgments will terminate its existence.—Soon the joyful shout will be heard—“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!”

2. The Christian may, with growing confidence, pray—“Thy Kingdom come.” For the downfall of

Romanism and Mahometanism will be followed by the rapid and triumphant spread of Gospel truth ; and the way will be prepared for the millennial day. There may be dark days yet before the Church ; and the day of her deliverance may not be as near as we hope. But the signs of the times certainly encourage the belief, that He that cometh will come, and will not tarry. “ Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

LECTURE III.

The Downfall of Mahometanism.

In the 8th chapter of Daniel, we have a prophecy concerning the Medo-Persian empire under the symbol of a ram with two horns, pushing westward, and northward and southward; so that no beast might stand before him. Then we have a prophecy concerning the rise of the Macedonian Empire under the symbol of a he-goat coming from the West so rapidly, that he did not touch the ground. He had a notable horn between his eyes; and he overcame the ram; and when he had become very powerful, "the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered." From the time when this

prophecy was delivered, to the final overthrow of this persecuting power, there was to be a period of twenty-three hundred years. "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." This power, as Faber has proved, is Mahometanism.

In the 9th chapter of Revelations there is a remarkable prophecy, which commentators and writers on prophecy, have with remarkable unanimity, understood as relating to the rise and progress of Mahometanism. At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, a star fell from heaven to earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. When he opened it, a smoke rose, darkening the heavens. Out of the smoke came locusts. They were to torment men *five months*, or one hundred and fifty years.

Under the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the Turks, converts to Mahometanism, who had established four Sultanies in the regions bordering on the Euphrates, were to go forth in one immense army of horsemen "for an hour, a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men;" that is for a period of three hundred and ninety-one years. It has been commonly understood, that Mahometanism and Popery will be overthrown about the same time; that the twenty-three hundred years and the twelve hundred and sixty years will terminate together. My present purpose, as I have before stated, is not to go into any minute examination of the prophecies; but, keeping in view the interpretations of the most judicious writers, to try to ascertain how far that interpretation seems to be verified by the signs of the times. We have seen the decay of Romanism from the period of Reformation, and its present critical state. Let us now inquire into the rise, progress,

decay and present prospects of Mahometanism. We propose briefly to notice several points :

1. Mahometanism took its rise amongst the Arabs — a most remarkable people. Though they have lived very much by plunder, they have never been conquered. Though warlike and cruel, they are celebrated for their hospitality toward those who gain their friendship. The Arabs themselves are idolaters ; though at the time when Mahomet arose, there dwelt amongst them many Jews and professed Christians.

2. Mahomet was born A. D. 569, and was descended from distinguished chiefs of the Koreish Arabs, who held the high office of keeping the Caaba, or square temple of Mecca. He lost his father when quite young, and was educated chiefly by his uncle Abu Zaleb, prince and pontiff of Mecca, by whom he was trained to war and commerce. At the age of twenty-five, he became the factor of a rich widow, to whom he was afterwards married. He was thus placed on an equality with the principal merchants of Mecca.

In the 40th year of his age, he announced himself a *prophet*, whose mission was to destroy idolatry, and restore the worship of the true God. For some time he had been accustomed, to retire to a cave near Mecca for religious devotion. The first converts he gained were his wife, his cousin and a slave. At the end of three years, having made converts of half a dozen of the chief men of the city, he made his pretensions public. As the number of his converts began to multiply, they were met by persecution ; and some eighty of his followers fled into Ethiopia. Meanwhile several inhabitants of Medina

became converts. In that city his success was more flattering than in Mecca; and thither he fled from a plot against his life. In Medina he erected a dwelling and a mosque. In the 12th year of his prophetic life, occurred his night-journey from Mecca by way of Jerusalem to heaven. And about the same time he proclaimed—that God had granted him permission to take up arms against his enemies. “Permission is granted to those who take up arms against the unbelievers, for that they have been unjustly persecuted by them.” Koran, ch. 22. In the 8th year of the Hegira, Mahomet sent embassies to a number of princes, proclaiming his pretensions as a prophet, by several of whom they were favorably received. In the same year he gained a victory over the Greeks in Syria, and took the city of Mecca, and destroyed its idols. From this period his success was surprisingly rapid. He died in the sixty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by his father-in-law.

This great imposture owed its success almost entirely to the sword. Animated by a fanatical zeal, as well as by a desire for plunder, the followers of Mahomet rushed into battle with an irresistible impetuosity. The only terms to the vanquished were submission to the faith, payment of tribute, or death. “At the end of the first century of the Hegira,” says Gibbon, “the Caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe. * * * They reigned by right of conquest over the nations of the East, to whom the name of liberty was unknown, and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence and severity that were exercised at their own expense. Under the last of the Omniades, the Arabian empire extended two

hundred days journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean." Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa and Spain, in rapid succession, yielded to their victorious armies. They invaded Rome and France, and from the latter they were expelled by Charles Martel.

At the end of one hundred and fifty years, Caliph Almansor built Bagdad on the banks of the Tigris, and named it *the city of peace*. There he fixed his residence; and there terminated the progress of the Saracens. Thus ended the "five months" of Revelation, during which they were to "hurt men." To both the Greek and Romish churches, Mahometanism proved a terrific scourge.

As the zeal and the power of the Saracens decayed, the Turks originally introduced into their camps as slaves, or as hired soldiers, inherited both; and in the 11th century they succeeded in establishing four Sultanies in Persia, and in the regions bordering on the Euphrates. When the war by the crusaders ceased, they commenced their aggressive operations. In the year 1281, they gained the first conquest over Christians; the last success by which their dominions were extended, was gained in the year 1672. Thus the "four angels" or Sultanies, "were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men." And here, in passing, it is worth while to notice the striking correspondence between the language of prophecy, fortelling the victories of the Turks, and that of Gibbon, the infidel historian, in recording them. John the Apostle says—"And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand"—evidently a definite

for an indefinite number. Rev. 9: 16. Gibbon says —“The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles from Taurus to Azeroum, and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet.”

From the year 1672, dates the decline of the Turkish empire; and it is a remarkable fact, stated by Scott, the commentator, noticing the 391 years intervening between the first and the last conquest of the Turks, “that one of their historians (Prince Cantemir) here divides his narrative, calling the former part ‘The growth of the Othman empire,’ and the latter, ‘The decay of the Othman empire.’” The success and continuance of so shallow an imposture for so long a time, present a subject of interesting inquiry. They may, however, be accounted for, by the following considerations:

1. The peculiar character of Mahomet. It has been a question, whether he was an impostor or a fanatic; whether he deliberately laid his plans to deceive men, or whether he succeeded in persuading himself, that he was the prophet of God, and that he received from heaven the revelations of the Koran. Whatever answer may be given to these questions, it cannot be doubted that he had traits of character which eminently qualified him for the work he undertook. He has been described as possessing a piercing and sagacious wit, thoroughly versed in the arts of insinuation, having a remarkable acquaintance with human nature, a sound judgment, indomitable courage, and a contempt for riches, and withal a flowing eloquence. Such a man, nearly related to the most honorable families amongst the Arabs, could scarcely

fail of considerable success in such an undertaking.

2. The character of his religion. In the first place, his system was formed by the artful blending of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity. He thus conciliated the three classes of people whose conversion it was important for him, in the beginning, to effect. He acknowledged the Old Testament as a divine revelation, and Jesus Christ as a great prophet.

In the second place, Mahometanism is a religion of *external observances*. Its chief duties are prayers, ablutions, fasting in the month of Ramadan, giving of alms and pilgrimage. Five times every twenty-four hours, the Mahometan repeats his prayers, viz.: in the morning before the rising of the sun; when noon is past; before sunset; between sunset and dark; and before the first watch of the night. Prayer, according to Mahomet, is the pillar of religion, and the key of paradise. Ablutions were deemed so necessary, that if water could not be had, he allowed his followers to use sand or fine dust. The giving of alms he regarded as highly meritorious; and not a few Mahometans have proved the genuineness of their faith by their extraordinary liberality. Fasting, Mahomet used to say, is the gate of religion. "The Mahometans are obliged, by the express command of the Koran, to fast the whole month of Ramadan, from the time the new moon first appears, till the appearance of the next new moon; and this fast they observe rigidly each day from sunrise till sunset."

Men, it has been said, are religious beings. Certain it is—that conscience, a sense of helplessness, trouble, hopes and fears in view of the future

state, cause all men to desire a religion which will meet these necessities ; and if they can be persuaded of the truth of a system which promises protection here and salvation hereafter, and at the same time flatters or indulges their depraved dispositions ; the number of irreligious men will be very small. A religion of external observances, even though some of these observances may be of a painful character, has always taken strong hold of human nature. No wonder, then, that Mahometanism pleased the people — especially as it rose in an age when Christianity itself had been almost buried beneath the multitude of traditional ceremonies, and had consequently almost lost its power to purify the heart, or regulate the life.

Thirdly. The pleasures promised by Mahomet and the heaven of Mahometanism, are pre-eminently *car-nal*. For himself he claimed by divine grant as many wives as he desired ; and he indulged his lusts without stint. A plurality of wives was allowed to all his followers. Heaven itself he represented as a place where the appetites and passions would be forever indulged, and where men would enjoy the most exquisite gratification without restraint. That such a religion should make converts and excite an ardent zeal, especially in an age of ignorance and corruption, cannot be surprising.

Fourthly. To those who fell in fighting for the faith, Mahomet promised heaven. “ If we be killed in your service,” his friends at Medina asked, “ what shall be our reward ?” He answered, “ Paradise.” “ The sword,” said he, “ is the key of heaven and of hell : a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer.” And of those

wounded in battle he said, at the day of judgment their wounds would be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk. The loss of limbs should be supplied with wings of angels and cherubim. All men, and Arabs especially, are sufficiently fond of war and plunder. No wonder, that with the favor of God and a heaven of carnal pleasures promised, the followers of Mahomet fought with a fanatical fury which overpowered all resistance. "Mahomet," says Gibbon, "was alike instructed to preach and to fight, and the union of these opposite qualities, while it enhanced his merit, contributed to his success; the operation of force and persuasion, of enthusiasm and fear, continually acted on each other, till every barrier yielded to their irresistible power. His voice invited the Arabs to freedom and victory, to arms and rapine, to the indulgence of their darling passions in this world and the other."*

3. The condition of the world and of the Christian Church greatly favored the triumph of Mahometanism. The pure, life-giving doctrines of the Cross were buried beneath the rubbish of human traditions; and the unscriptural worship of the saints, which had become almost universal, gave Mahomet ground for charging Christians with idolatry. "The Man of sin" just now sat in the temple of God, claiming divine honors; and the world was fast hastening to *sæcula tenebricosa*—the dark ages. Meanwhile the Roman empire had been overrun by northern barbarians; and the feeble successors of Constantine offered no very formidable resistance to the fierce and impetuous spirit of the Saracens.

* Decline and fall of Rom. Easn. 2. 4. pp 93, 94.

Here let us pause, and mark the striking contrast between Christianity and Mahometanism. Christianity, instead of promising unrestrained indulgence of the appetites here and hereafter, requires every appetite to be controlled, and every sinful passion and affection to be subdued. The heaven to which it invites men, is a place where "the spirits of just men made perfect" find complete felicity in the presence of a thrice holy God. Instead of unsheathing the sword, in the commencement of its career, it relied simply on the power of truth. Its Apostles and ministers meekly bore the bitterest persecutions, and returned good for evil. In its onward march was not heard "the battle of the warrior with confused noise;" nor were seen "garments rolled in blood." But the wilderness and the solitary places were made glad; and the deserts blossomed as the rose. Where Christianity came, it brought purity, and peace, and joy. It achieved its most glorious triumphs, when it stood alone, unaided by the civil arm, nay, when the whole world was arrayed against it.

But Mahometanism has seen its day. The infirmities of age are upon it. The signs of the times foretell its speedy death. Let us take a view of its present condition and prospects, and see if it be not so.

1. Mahometanism has long lost its zeal and its hope of further conquests. Its votaries may still look with sullen contempt upon Christians, and quietly repeat their prayers five times each day. But they no longer expect to propagate their faith, either by force or by persuasion. Like all false systems of religion, it has lost its zeal and its power, as the circumstances which gave it birth and temporary success, have passed away. Romanism may seem to present

an exception to the general rule just stated; but the exception is only *seeming*, not *real*. It still has a zeal for propagation; but its aggressive power is well nigh gone. Protestantism and even Paganism have successfully resisted it. Christianity, on the contrary, never loses its freshness and its power. Now, as when first it was proclaimed, the Gospel commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Now, as then, its fruits prove it divine. But Mahometanism is the *form* without the *power*. Its vitality is gone, simply because it was a vitality derived mainly from the circumstances in which it arose. It cannot propagate itself; and in an age when everything moves, it cannot stand still. It must be *run over*.

2. Mahometanism is incapable of sustaining civil government, especially in the present age. Its original theory is the strict union of church and state. As a system of religion, it can neither enlighten nor purify. Its civil government, therefore, was established by force, and has been sustained by tyranny. In every free government, the majority of the people must not only understand their own rights and interests, but must be so far under the control of sound moral principles, that they will sacredly regard the rights of others. Under Mahometan rule this state of things can never exist. Not only is the Turkish government a tyranny; it is a tyranny of the worst kind. For its civil offices are sold; and the aim of the purchasers, of course, is to make the best of their bargain by extorting from the people. As a tyranny, it is greatly weakened by the multitudes under its rule, who sigh for freedom, and intensely desire its overthrow. The Greeks, the Jews, the

Papists and the Protestants, who compose the very large majority of the population, all desire to see radical changes; all hope for the overthrow of Mahometanism. Such a government cannot long stand, in an age when the human mind in every nation is aroused to think, and to know and claim its rights; and when the light from more favored countries is pouring in to dissipate the darkness which has so long brooded over Turkey.

3. Contempt of Christianity and of learning has thrown Turkey very far behind christian nations. The wanton destruction of the celebrated Alexandrian library, exhibited the spirit that has ever characterized this barbarous superstition. When the librarian asked, as a favor, that this inestimable treasure might be spared; the answer of Omar, the caliph, was—"If these writings of the Greeks agree with the book of God, they are useless, and need not be preserved; if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed." "The sentence," says Gibbon, "was executed with blind obedience: the volumes of paper or parchment were distributed to the four thousand baths in the city; and such was the incredible multitude that six months were hardly sufficient for the consumption of this precious fuel." But the day has passed, when any nation can safely ignore the discoveries of science, and reject the elevating influence of Christianity. Science, baptized, if I may so say, in the name of Christ, has ceased to be confined, as in pagan lands, or in the dark ages, to a few speculative philosophers. Its range is through the region of fact and experiment; and its discoveries are turned to practical use. From every department it brings its contributions to the

wealth as well as the intelligence of men. Christianity has taken it by the hand, and guided its investigations. The result is—that the nations blessed with the light of Christianity and the resources of science, are immeasurably superior to all others. In agriculture, in manufactures, in internal improvements, in commerce, in general intelligence, in sound morals, what a contrast is exhibited between Great Britain or the United States, and Turkey!

This contrast is the more striking, and the inferiority of Turkey is the more painfully visible, because the improvements in travel, and the increase of intercourse have brought the nations, as it were, to each other's doors. Mahometanism can no longer retire from the spreading light, or conceal from its votaries their humiliating inferiority to the nations they once so heartily despised. They are compelled to learn of those they would scarcely have condescended to instruct, and to prop up their tottering fabric by improvements derived from those they were taught to despise. The consequences must be the more certainly and the more speedily disastrous to Mahometanism, because there are multitudes in the Turkish Empire, whose minds are not fettered by the degrading doctrines of the Koran. Those will learn. They are in fact learning; and soon the governing party must become greatly inferior to those whom they have oppressed. Then a revolution destructive to the faith of the Arabian prophet, must be the result. And when Mahometanism ceases to rule, it must soon cease to exist.

4. The direct and indirect influence of Christianity and Christian civilization has already accomplished much, and is in a position to accomplish much more,

for the overthrow of Mahometanism. For more than thirty years, American missionaries have labored for the promotion of a pure Christianity in the Turkish Empire. The obstacles they at first encountered, were very great and often disheartening. Nevertheless they persevered; and they now begin to see the fruits of their toils. They now begin to realize the fulfilment of the promise — that “he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” I cannot now go into details to show all that has been accomplished. I will only say — first, that not only toleration, but the protection of the government, has been secured. Missionaries now establish schools, organize churches, print and circulate the Bible and religious books, without danger of persecution. In Constantinople, under the eye of the Sultan, their schools and churches are prospering. Secondly, many churches have been established, where the gospel is now preached in its purity. Many schools have been planted; and in them many youth have been made acquainted with the Gospel, as well as with human learning, and have gone forth to exert a happy influence. Much has been accomplished, too, by circulating the Scriptures amongst the Greek Churches, and amongst the Armenians and Nestorians.

By the way, it is a deeply interesting and significant fact, that the clergy of the Greek Church have never imitated the bad example of the Church of Rome in forbidding the people to read the Scriptures; nor are they restrained by a claim of infallibility, or by the impious pretence of forgiving or retaining sins. There are strong reasons, therefore, to hope that

soon the Greek Church will be reformed. Enlightened by the word of God, they will throw off the load of human tradition which has been for centuries accumulating. For the Church of Rome there is no such ground of hope. Never did her clergy exhibit a more bitter enmity to the Bible, than now; and never did the Pope set forth more blasphemous claims. The Church of Rome will be overwhelmed; but the Greek Church, we may hope, will be reformed.

Nor can we avoid here drawing the contrast between Romanism and Mahometanism. The latter has been wise enough gradually to yield to the light it could not exclude. Instead of the insane attempt to exterminate the rising spirit of liberty, it has granted freedom of conscience, and protected those who refused to embrace the Koran. Rome, utterly infatuated, still dreams of universal dominion. Her clergy, therefore, stand arrayed in an unbroken phalanx against the progress of freedom. With the loss of power they have had no change of principles. Whilst, therefore, Mahometanism may melt away under the influence of the Gospel, Romanism will be thrown like a mill-stone into the sea. Whilst all the wise and good will rejoice at the decay of Mahometanism; there will be one universal shout of Hallelujah! at the downfall of Romanism.

5. The war now raging must prove most disastrous to Mahometanism. Time was, when it would have scorned to put itself under the protection of Christian nations. It aspired to universal dominion; and the sword was its potent argument. Now it has not only lost all hope of further propagation; but it has been obliged to confess its inability to protect its own life. Russia threatens to crush it, and it has no power to

resist. It has turned to England and France, and placed itself under their protection. Mahometans no longer need arguments to convince them of the immense superiority of the Christians whom they were taught to despise. They see and feel it. And then the friendly intercourse between Christians and Mahometans will melt away prejudices. If the latter are obliged to endure the humiliating sense of inferiority ; they still regard their superiors as friends in time of need — as allies whose superiority is absolutely necessary to the protection of their country. The existing intercourse, therefore, is of a character to conciliate and enlighten the Mahometan mind. Should England and France be successful, they are not likely to leave Mahometanism as they found it. Still greater liberties must be secured to Christians ; and it is scarcely probable, that the barbarous law which inflicts capital punishment on a Mahometan for changing his religious faith, will be allowed to continue in force. Let this law be repealed, and let every Mahometan be free to think for himself ; and the day is at hand when the Koran will be thrown to the moles and the bats.

Indeed the work has already begun. A correspondent of one of the eastern papers states, that the faces of Mussulmans in Constantinople begin to wear a more kindly look toward the Franks ; that St. Sophia and the other Mosques can now be visited by gentlemen and ladies without a firman. But what is far better, they are beginning to purchase and read the Bible. “ Fortunately,” says the writer, “ we have several editions of the Bible, or parts of the Bible, in the Turkish language, and they come publicly to our book-store and purchase it, a thing

quite new under the sun." He adds — "The changes indicated above are themselves a moral revolution. Soon the death-penalty for the renunciation of Mahometanism must be abolished, and then the word of God will have free course and be glorified."

But let us suppose, that in the present war Russia will triumph; in this event Mahometanism must be crushed. For it is not to be supposed, that the Czar will feel bound, or inclined to favor it. But will Russia triumph? It is difficult to give even a probable answer to the question. If the Emperor of France should be killed, or should suddenly die; all Europe would probably be in a blaze within a month. No man in France, it is believed, could step in his place. France would be convulsed to its centre; and where and how the agitation would cease, none can tell. And then there would be a universal uprising in Papal Europe; and the scenes of '48 would be re-enacted with more fearful and more permanent results.

Or should the Emperor lose his popularity in consequence of disasters in the war, a revolution might occur in France with results similar to those which would follow his death. In either event, France might be withdrawn from the alliance with England; and then Russia might gain what she seeks. As things now are, we can only wait and see what God in His Providence will work. "The Lord reigneth;" and his hand will rule in this war. He has great purposes to accomplish by it; and whatever may be the aims of men, "the counsel of the Lord shall stand."

We have one reason, however, for believing that Russia will not establish her authority in Turkey.

The history of the Church and the world will show, that the providence and the Spirit of God have wonderfully co-operated in the affairs of men. Now, the Spirit of God put it into the hearts of many of his servants to go and plant churches and schools in Turkey; and the Providence of God has opened the way for them to do this work. A great work—chiefly a work of *preparation*—has been done. Should Russia now succeed in establishing her power in Turkey; there is too much reason to believe, that all this work of preparation would be lost. It is not for finite minds to penetrate the mysteries of Divine wisdom; but, reasoning from the past, we are not prepared to believe, that God will allow the work done for the evangelization of Turkey, to be destroyed.

But whatever may be the termination of the present war, it must hasten the destruction of Mahometanism. It has long been gradually becoming weaker; and now in its extremity there are none to help it. For whatever interest England and France may have in preventing the Czar establishing his authority in Turkey, neither they, nor any other nation, have any interest in perpetuating the Mahometan religion. It is universally regarded as a base imposture, and as a relic of a barbarous age. Soon we shall see the complete fulfilment of that remarkable prophecy—“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared.”

The following conclusions seem justified, in view of the facts and principles now stated, viz:

1. As in the history of Romanism, so in that

of Mahometanism, we see the remarkable fulfilment of prophecy, and consequently the evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures. These two great anti-christian powers have risen, flourished and decayed, in accordance with the predictions of the Bible; and now, about the time indicated by the inspired writers, they are tottering to their fall. The one is being *dried up*; the other is preparing for a dreadful overthrow. The one quietly yields to an inevitable doom; the other gathers up all its remaining strength to make one last death-struggle against God and his Church. The downfall of both will confirm the truth of prophecy, and usher in a new era in the world's history.

2. In the history of Mahometanism, we see the providence of God controlling the errors and wickedness of men, for the accomplishment of his wise purposes. Mahometanism was designed to be a great and terrible scourge to the Greek and Latin churches, because of their corruptions of the word of God and their immoralities. It rose and triumphed "by reason of transgression:" and it was permitted to hurt only "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, and that they should not worship devils [i. e., the spirits of deceased men and women] and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and wood." To the Waldenses, and to those who embraced the Reformation, Mahometanism was not a scourge. It arose at the time appointed of God. It accomplished the work assigned it, though it meant not so. It now hastens to its end. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of

wrath thou wilt restrain.” Let not the Christian fear for the Church of Christ, when the powers of darkness rise and rage. He whose arm is omnipotent, has said—“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Nay—they shall but prepare the way for the more signal triumph of the Gospel.

3. As the downfall of Popery and Mahometanism stand connected with a great epoch in the history of the world, the signs of their approaching destruction indicate the nearness of that epoch. What a change must take place in the history of the world, when these two great anti-christian powers shall have passed away! Then may we look for the Gospel to triumph gloriously; and the morning star of the millennium will be seen in the heavens. Rather, let me say—the Sun of righteousness will rise upon the nations with healing in his wings.

LECTURE IV.

The Overthrow of Infidelity.

The signs of the times, if we have rightly interpreted them, indicate the speedy downfall of the two great anti-christian powers, Romanism and Mahometanism. Immediately after their downfall, the prophecies lead us to expect great and unprecedented triumphs for the Church of Christ. Daniel says—“But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” John the apostle says—“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.— And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” These and similar prophecies evidently point to extraordinary triumphs of the Gospel about the time of the downfall of Rome.

It now becomes a deeply interesting inquiry, how far the signs of the times afford evidence, that the

Gospel is likely to be successful in asserting its claims against the different forms of Infidelity. For it is quite possible, that for a length of time, Infidelity may take the place of those worn-out superstitions. This is the more probable, because in countries where Popery has prevailed, and in those where Protestantism has become corrupt, a large portion of the more intelligent classes, judging of Christianity by what they see in its professed advocates, have adopted infidel sentiments. France, Spain, Italy, and Germany afford painful examples of this kind.

Let us commence this discussion by stating very briefly the main grounds upon which the claims of the Bible to be a Divine Revelation are maintained. Believers in the inspiration of the Scriptures affirm —

1. That Christ and his Apostles *wrought miracles* in confirmation of what they taught. A miracle is a work performed by Omnipotence, which neither the laws of nature nor any finite power could effect. For example, we know that the laws of nature never would suddenly, and at the bidding of a man, give sight to one born blind; and we know as well, that no finite power could do it. We know, that the natural tendency of a dead body is to decay and decomposition; and none but God can instantly impart life to such a body. If, then, it can be proved by abundant testimony, that Christ and his Apostles performed such works in confirmation of their mission and their doctrine; their claims are established. For a miracle is God's testimony, set forth not in words, but in acts. Now, we boldly affirm, that upon admitted principles of testimony, we can prove that our Savior and his Apostles did confirm their teaching by many miracles.

2. We find throughout the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, predictions of future events which no human sagacity could have foreseen. We find, on careful examination, that the events foretold are stated with distinctness, and with such detailed circumstances, that nothing short of inspiration could save the writers from exposure. Yet profane history has recorded the events thus foretold. For example, let any sceptic compare the predictions of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the destruction of Babylon with the events recorded by profane history, and with its present condition: and his scepticism will give place to faith. Then let him read carefully the prophecies respecting the dispersion of the Jews, and compare those prophecies with the almost miraculous preservation of that singular people: and he cannot but believe.—Amidst the ruin of other nations and of other forms of religion, the Jews as a religious people—a people distinct from all others—still survive, and still look for their Messiah. We need not go to the East to find them. They meet us in our own cities. Their synagogues rise up beside our churches. The peculiar countenance of the Jew meets our eye, as we walk our streets; and we find little difficulty in distinguishing the descendants of Abraham from others. Now, we do know, that no man can of himself foresee future events. We may indeed judge of the working of principles with which we are acquainted. We may reason from the past, and to some extent anticipate the immediate future. But the predictions of the Bible depend on no such principles, and are far from being confined by such limitations. Every clear prophecy, therefore, is an

unanswerable proof of the inspiration of the writer of it. As a miracle is the work of infinite *power*; so is prophecy the work of infinite *wisdom*. Each, therefore, is God's testimony to the inspiration of those through whom miracles are wrought, or prophecies uttered.

3. The Scriptures claim to be a perfect rule for the moral conduct of men. On a careful examination we discover, that they embrace all the relations of life, all the duties growing out of these relations, and all the motives which can operate on the human mind to lead it to virtue. We find many important moral principles stated, and every one of them is demonstrably sound. The virtues it enjoins, are true virtues. The vices it condemns, are really injurious to men. In a word, the Scriptures present a perfect moral code, from which nothing can be subtracted, to which nothing can be added. No moral code approaching the same perfection is found in the writings of the wise men of any age. The conclusion is irresistible — that this moral code is not the work of ignorant men, or of men at all, but of the infinitely perfect God.

This conclusion is greatly strengthened, when we examine *the plan of salvation* presented in the Bible. It answers the great questions which agitate every thinking mind, and meets the felt wants of the human soul. The mind is so constituted, that it cannot but desire intensely to know whether it is *immortal*. The Gospel dispels the doubts that hang over the future, and “brings life and immortality to light.” All men are convinced of having sinned, and are conscious of being sinful, or, at least, imperfect. All, therefore desire to know, whether

God can consistently forgive sin ; and if so, on what terms he will do it. All desire to know how they may be prepared for a happy immortality. Human philosophy gives no satisfactory answer to these questions. The Gospel comes to our relief. It imparts all the desired information. Its effects upon human happiness, as well as upon morals, are found to be most desirable in all the vicissitudes of life. It is not, it cannot be the work of ignorant, selfish, designing men. It bears on its every feature the marks of Divinity.

4. We find, too, many *collateral* evidences of the truth of the Bible. Its historical statements are confirmed by profane writers. The geography and topography of the countries it describes, are found remarkably accurate, when compared with the statements of travelers. Its accounts, direct and indirect, of the manners and customs of the people are abundantly corroborated. It is found singularly to harmonize with the discoveries of science.

On such evidences Christianity claims the credence of men. These claims are set forth with attending advantages and disadvantages. Let us for a moment, consider these. In the first place, it labors under serious disadvantages. such as the following :

1. *The thoughtlessness of men.* The tendency, during the period of youth, is to levity and hilarity. As age advances, cares multiply. In the hurry of business little time is allowed for investigation or reflection. Men will not pause long enough to inquire whether Christianity is true or false, or to understand and embrace its glorious principles, if they admit them to be true.

2. *The depravity of men.* Every impure affec-

tion in the heart rises up against a system of religion which threatens death as the penalty of sin. There would be little difficulty in persuading men to be religious, if they were not required to be holy. "Light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

3. *The pride of men.* The Gospel gives a humiliating view of the moral character and condition of the human race, and offers a salvation wholly of grace. But one of the most remarkable and uniform effects of depravity, is to fill the mind with self-righteousness; and there is nothing with which men more reluctantly part, than their good opinion of themselves. Accordingly every false system of religion, whilst it indulges the sinful propensities, offers eternal happiness as the reward, wholly or in large part, of human merit. The same thing is true of every corruption of Christianity. Erroneous systems are formed to suit human nature. All the self-righteousness in each heart rises up against a plan of salvation *wholly of grace*—against the Gospel which is "not after man."

But Christianity, in asserting its claims as a divine revelation, possesses two very important advantages, viz.:

1. It commends itself to *the consciences*, as well as to the *intellects* of men. It is not only seen to be *true*; but it is felt to be *right*. The moral principles it inculcates, will bear the closest scrutiny. It teaches, that whatever is good or bad in the human mind, is in the *affections*, not in the intellect, nor in the body. It, therefore, lays its claims on the *heart*. It asserts, that men are accountable for their moral affections,

and for the acts which flow from them. It holds, that all are bound to love, worship and obey God; and it teaches that all have failed to do this, and are, therefore, sinners. It claims, that every sinner is under obligation to repent and reform. It proclaims that, in the government of God, there is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness, and between sin and unhappiness. These and many similar moral principles the Scriptures abundantly teach; and, properly presented to the mind, they commend themselves irresistibly to the conscience.

2. Christianity meets the deeply felt wants of the soul. Am I immortal?— is a question which every reflecting mind has asked with intense interest. And then another question naturally arises, viz: if I am immortal, how may I make my immortality a happy one? “All have sinned.” This truth every one feels in his inmost soul. Strong as is the tendency to self righteousness, the conscience cannot be perfectly blinded; and there are times when its voice must be heard, and when fearful apprehensions of a future reckoning disturb the sinner in his career. These questions assume an alarming significance, when disappointments and afflictions wither cherished hopes, and give to the world in which happiness was confidently anticipated, the aspect of a dreary wilderness. In the midst of trouble and uncertainties, there is something in the Gospel, as it “brings life and immortality to light,” opens the way to a heaven of eternal glory, and offers hope as an anchor of the soul, which takes hold of the mind, and makes to feel that there its longing desires may be satisfied.

With such advantages and disadvantages the Gospel

goes forth to enlighten the world ; and it goes forth, not without the accompanying influences, in multitudes of instances, of that Spirit by whom it was dictated. Men, wise in their own conceit, have preferred their reasonings to God's revelation ; but the endless contradictions of those reputed wise, and the entire failure to bring forth any system which meets the wants of mankind, have demonstrated the incompetency of human reason to draw from nature the responses it desires. We are inclined to hope and to believe, that infidelity with its ever varying forms has had its day. Let us very briefly examine some of the most important forms it has assumed.

1. The first form of Infidelity I propose to notice, is *Deism*. Deists profess to believe in the existence of one infinitely perfect God, and that his being, perfections and will are so clearly discernible from the light of nature and reason, that no revelation is necessary. This form of infidelity prevailed in England in the 17th century, and numbered amongst its advocates many men of learning and influence. In our own country it has had, and still has its adherents. This system, however, labors under several insuperable difficulties.

1st. In the first place, the condition of all nations, ancient and modern, where the Bible has been unknown, proves it false. All without exception have been polytheists and idolaters, and have been blinded and deluded by degrading superstitions. They looked abroad upon the light of nature, and brought into requisition their reasoning powers ; and yet "the world by wisdom knew not God ;" and failing to discover his being and perfections, they necessarily failed to learn his will. Even philosophers groped in the dark, some denying the existence of

God; others denying his providence over men. In a conversation with a sceptic of extensive reading, some years ago, I asked the question — “Have you in all your reading, found a single man, in any pagan land, whom you would be willing to acknowledge as a fair specimen of a Deist?” His reply was — “I never thought of that.” I said to him — “I wish you would think of it; and if you find such a man, report him to me. For I have found none such.” He never made his report, because, as I concluded, he never found a Deist in any pagan land. What is the unavoidable conclusion? Why, that Deists in Christian countries have got their light from the Bible, and then boastingly claimed it for nature and reason. To a reflecting Deist the world must present an inexplicable mystery. He sees a race of intelligent beings who, according to his creed, are not depraved, but disposed to learn and practice virtue. He sees spread before them a glorious volume in which are revealed with abundant clearness the being, the perfections and the will of God. Yet none rightly understand it. Even the most celebrated philosophers can do no more than give out their uncertain and contradictory speculations; whilst gross darkness broods over the masses of the people. Vain theory! All nations rise up to proclaim it utterly false, and to testify that men do need a revelation from God. Nay — Deists themselves have shrunk back from their own conclusions. The learned Lord Herbert was one of the first writers in England in favor of Deism; and when he had written his book to prove, that a revelation is not necessary, he knelt down and prayed for a revelation to teach him whether he should publish it! Of this singular pro-

ceeding Lord Herbert himself gives the following account :

“ Being thus doubtful, in my chamber, one fair day in the summer, my casement being open towards the South, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book *de Veritate* in my hands, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words: ‘ O, thou eternal God, Author of this light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations ; I do beseech thee, of thine infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make : I am not satisfied enough, whether I shall publish this book ; if it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from heaven ; if not, I shall suppress it.’ I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise, came forth from the heavens (for it was like nothing on earth,) which did so cheer and comfort me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded ; whereupon, also, I resolved to print my book. This, how strange soever it may seem, I protest before the eternal God, is true ; neither am I any way superstitiously deceived herein ; since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but in the serenest sky that ever I saw, being without all cloud, did, to my thinking, see the place from whence it came.”*

Here we have the singular phenomenon of a revelation designed to prove, that a revelation is not needed! Dr. Leland well remarks—“ I cannot help thinking, that if any writer, zealous for Christianity, had given such an account of himself,

*Leland's Deist, Writers, v. 1, p. 27.

as praying for, and expecting a sign from heaven to determine his doubt, whether he should publish a book he had composed in favor of the Christian cause; and upon hearing a noise, which he took to be from heaven, had looked upon it as a mark of divine approbation, and as a call to publish that book; it would have passed for a high fit of enthusiasm, and would no doubt have subjected the author to much ridicule among the gentlemen that oppose revealed religion.”

But most evident it is—that the ignorance and degradation of the people of all pagan nations, and the confusion and endless contradictions of philosophers, demonstrate how greatly mankind need a Divine Revelation. Ten thousand facts prove, that for men, as they now are, the light of nature is no sufficient guide.

2nd. Deism, like the pagan philosophy, leaves the immortality of the soul in doubt; and even if this point were established, it throws no light upon the state into which after death the soul passes. The Deists of England were divided into two classes, called *mortal* and *immortal* Deists—the one class denying, and the other maintaining the immortality of the soul. Now, it is the vainest thing in the world for men to assert the sufficiency of the light of nature and of reason to instruct us in matters of religion, when they themselves cannot agree on points of fundamental importance. But even if the question of the soul's immortality were settled beyond all doubt, this great truth would have little weight in a system of morals, unless we could know something of the future state; whether its happiness will be seriously effected by our conduct in this life, and

how we may so live, as to make our immortality happy. But these are questions respecting which Deism can only *speculate*. It has no *facts*, and therefore can arrive at no certain conclusions. A system whose future is so dark, can neither satisfy nor control minds that from their nature long for eternal life, and whose course of conduct is greatly modified by their future prospects.

3d. Deism cannot answer the question, whether God can consistently forgive sins, and if so, on what terms. To every man this is a question of profound interest. For, however lax may be the views which men take of their moral obligations, and however disposed they may be to look with complacency on their own doings; few, if any, can be found, in whose bosoms there is not a painful consciousness of guilt. The desire, therefore, to know whether sins will be forgiven, and on what terms, increases as the hour of death approaches; and no system of religious faith can satisfy the minds of men, which can give no certain answer to such a question. Lord Herbert laid it down as an article of his *universal religion*, "that we must repent of our sins; and if we do, God will pardon them." But what evidence can the Deist produce in favor of this article? He can reason only from facts. Can he, then, show that God does interpose to relieve men from the consequences of their sins, when they repent? If a man, whilst young, has destroyed his physical constitution; will repentance secure to him that which he has lost? Must he not, even though he bitterly repent, still bear the legitimate consequences of his early dissipation? The Deist has no facts from which to draw his conclusion. Nay,

more — the fair inference from facts would be, that hereafter, as here, every man must suffer all the legitimate consequences of his sins. Send your Deist to the dying bed of the man who has spent much of his life in sin, but who is now in deep distress; and let him try to answer satisfactorily the anxious question of the dying man — “Can my sins be forgiven? and if so, what must I do to secure pardon?” What answer can he give? The death-bed is not the place for philosophical speculations, which leave the mind in doubt. In such an hour one desires to feel himself standing on a firmer foundation. Now send the Christian with the Bible in his hand to that same dying man. He can answer the question. He can assure the anxious inquirer, that God can forgive sins; and he can tell him on what terms. The Gospel can illumine “the valley of the shadow of death,” and give joy and peace to the departing spirit.

4th. Deism, even in Christian lands, has never been able to furnish a complete moral code. Nothing of the kind can be found in the writings of any Deist. Every system of moral science, worthy of the name, has been confessedly derived from the sacred Scriptures. This is a remarkable fact. Deists have talked and written eloquently of the sufficiency of the light of nature to guide men in the path of virtue; but is it not singular that they have scarcely made an attempt to tell in detail what the volume of nature teaches? Benjamin Franklin paid more attention than most Deists to this subject. In his auto-biography he tells us, he had formed, but never executed, the purpose to publish a book to be called “The art of Virtue;” and at one time he seriously

resolved on becoming a *perfect man*. “It was about the time,” says he, “I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at *moral perfection*. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time, and to conquer all that either natural inclination, custom or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not *always* do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my attention was taken up, and care employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason.” Finally he concluded, that he should be unsuccessful, unless he went to work *systematically*. He began, therefore, by forming what he regarded as a complete list of virtues, *thirteen* in number, as follows: Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, Chastity, Humility. In humility he adds — “Imitate Jesus and Socrates.” Such was Franklin’s list of virtues. That it is sufficiently defective every thinking mind must admit. Indeed, some of his virtues scarcely partake at all of a moral character. He then made a little book, in which he allotted a page for each of the virtues. He ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. He crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues; on which line, in its proper column, he marked by a little black spot every fault he found on examination

to have been committed against that virtue, on that day.

Thus prepared, our moralist went to work. But considering it rather a serious business to undertake the cultivation of *thirteen* virtues at once, he concluded to give special attention to one at a time, leaving the others to their chance. He says — “ My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix on *one* of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another; and so on, till I should have gone through the thirteen.” I determined to give a week’s strict attention to each of these virtues successively. Thus in the first week, my great guard was to avoid even the least offence against *Temperance*; leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day.”

Such was Franklin’s method of attaining to perfection. But vague and incomplete as was his list of virtues, he felt the need of divine aid to enable him to cultivate them. He, therefore, prepared a prayer to be regularly offered. He says — “ And conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my table of examination, for daily use:—

‘ O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom, which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children, as the only

return in my power for thy continual favors to me." Thus our sceptical moralist prayed for divine aid which was not promised, to keep a code of morals which God did not teach! It is not surprising, that his success was limited, and his plan finally abandoned. "After a while," says he, "I went through one course only in a year: and afterwards only one in several years; till at length, I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs, that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me."

I have been thus particular in giving an account of Dr. Franklin's moral system, and of his method of cultivating virtue, because it is the only systematic effort of the kind with which I have met; and because it will be admitted, that few Deists are likely to succeed better. Now, compare the moral code of the Scriptures with that of Franklin. How immeasurably superior the former, though prepared by men the most of whom were not distinguished by their learning — prepared too, in a very dark period of our world's history, when superstition and immorality universally prevailed. The superiority of the Bible is equally remarkable in its moral precepts, and in the motives by which it urges men to holy living. Dr. Franklin's code was alike destitute of authority and of motives. How shall we account for the entire failure of Deists to make out anything like a complete system of morals? If such a man as Franklin so completely failed, what may we expect from the masses of the people? Do they not need a revelations.

5th. Deism has failed to produce *good fruits*. Was it ever known, that a man was improved in morals by

abandoning Christianity, and embracing Deism? Does any one wonder, if a Deist is guilty of profanity? Is it expected, that men who proclaim themselves Deists, will, therefore, be very moral, or very benevolent men? Was Thomas Paine a very exemplary man in his moral character? As infidels are accustomed to celebrate his birth-day, we may conclude, that he is regarded as a fair example of Deistical morals. Would his life be likely to prove to any mind the truth of his system?

Now, it is a broad principle in morals, to which there is no exception, that moral truth, understood and sincerely embraced, always produces virtue. Indeed virtue is nothing else than affections and actions corresponding with the truth. The principle is stated by our Savior, when he says — “By their fruits ye shall know them.” If, then, Deism is true, and Christianity false; a man who rejects the latter, and embraces the former, will certainly thereby become a better man — better in all the relations of life. Is it so? Has it ever been so? On the contrary, are there not multitudes of instances in which the Deist has become a Christian, and thus become a far better man?

No — the fruits of Deism do not prove it true. It presents no objects to the heart's affections. Its precepts come without authority and without motive. It offers no certain rewards, and threatens no certain punishments. It is cold and powerless in life; and it is dark as midnight in death. It never makes its advocates either as virtuous or as happy, as Christianity.

2. The second phase of infidelity which I propose to examine, is *Atheism* or *Pantheism*. These are

two names for the same thing. The former boldly says — there is no God ; the latter says — Nature is God ; or the universe is God. It is the same thing reached by different processes of reasoning. Atheism is the legitimate product of the Sensational Philosophy, the most complete development of which has been witnessed in France. Pantheism is the product of the Idealistic Philosophy, which has flourished chiefly in Germany. The great error of both these systems is the attempt to explain *perception*, that is, *how the mind becomes acquainted with the material world through the senses*. Mind and matter are two substances essentially different in their natures and properties. How, then, can the mind see through the eye, and hear through the ear ? This question puzzled the ancient philosophers ; and their conclusions regarding it were sufficiently unsatisfactory. Modern philosophers have not improved upon the theories of the ancient. Indeed, the question does not come within the legitimate range of philosophical enquiry. Philosophy has to do with *facts*, not with *modes*. That man possesses a body which is material, is certain. That he has a mind what is immaterial, is no less clear. And that these two are so united as mutually to affect each other, cannot be doubted. But *how* they are united ; and *how* they mutually affect each other, no man can comprehend. The mind sees through the eye ; but *how* it sees, is a profound mystery.

But how, it may be asked, did Atheism and Pantheism result from this inquiry ? I answer —

1st. The sensational philosophers commenced in their reasonings with *the senses*, or with the *nerves*. We know, said they, that external objects make an

impression on the nerves. This impression we can trace to the brain. We can trace it no further. Thus far and no further we have facts. There is, therefore, no evidence of the existence of mind, apart from the brain; the brain is the mind. But if all the phenomena of thought may be found in the brain, which is matter; then all the evidences of design in the universe may be accounted for without the existence of an infinite Spirit. All we see is but the development of the laws of matter. Thus by a short process the sensational philosophers became Materialists and Atheists.

Their system of ethics, if they can be said to have had any, was such as might be expected from such philosophy. Morell thus states the principles of Hobbes, who may be justly regarded as the father of the sensational philosophy: "As good and evil are identical with pleasure and pain, and as all men necessarily desire the one and shun the other, so nature herself dictates the right to every man of doing whatever he may think conduces to these ends, and in this manner of securing for himself all the means of physical enjoyment he is able, at whatever expense to his fellow man. The natural state of man, therefore, must necessarily be a state of warfare, in which all are struggling to advance their own selfish interests, every man's hand being against his brother, and his brother's against him. In brief *might* and *right* are convertible terms.* Saint Lambert, another writer of the same school, maintained — "that, as man possesses only sensations, his sole good must be personal enjoyment, his only

* Hist. Mod. Phil. v. 1 p. 96.

duty the attainment of it ; and that, as we may be mistaken as to what objects are really adapted to promote our pleasure, the safest rule by which we can judge of duty in particular cases is public opinion." † Volney saw in man nothing but organized matter, and, like Hobbes, regarded good and evil as synonymous with pleasure and pain. Morell says — "He knew no evil besides death, and that which tends to it ; no good besides life and the external pleasures it offers ; he had no conception of moral obligation, beyond the duty of living so as to defer pain and death as long as possible, and secure as much as might be allowed of life, health and outward comfort." * * * In a word, he regarded man simply as an animal ; the whole of his moral code aimed professedly at the preservation of his animal nature ; neither did he shrink from defending murder itself as a virtue, whenever it tends to our security or defence."

The whole of this Philosophy, as it was embodied in the French Encyclopedia of Sciences, is thus summed up by the same elegant writer : "Nature, in her outward manifestations, is the foundation of all its researches, man is to it but a mass of organization, mind the development of our sensations, morality self-interest, and God the diseased fiction of an unenlightened and enthusiastic age."‡ Such is the Sensational Philosophy.

2. Pantheism is the fruit of the German or Idealistic Philosophy. It commenced its investigations with *the mind*. *Cogito, ergo sum*—I think, therefore I exist. This was the starting point in the

† Ib. p. 159, 160.

‡ Ib. pp. 554, 553.

Philosophy of Descartes. The consciousness of thinking, reasoning, &c., satisfied him of the existence of mind, which he regarded as simple and spiritual. There was another fundamental truth which he held to be indubitable, viz: the existence of an infinitely perfect God. This idea, he argued, is certainly in the mind. It could not come from any finite source. The very fact, therefore, of its existence in the mind, proves the existence of God.

But here he met the same difficulty, the attempted solution of which drove the sensational philosophers into Materialism and Atheism, viz: how the mind, which is immaterial, can communicate with the outer world. Holding that mind and matter can exert no direct influence upon each other, and therefore distrusting the evidence derived from the senses of the existence of material things, he referred the whole to the Divine veracity. God would not deceive us; and, therefore, whilst we may not depend upon the testimony of our senses, we may rely upon his veracity. "By assigning our sense-perceptions to divine interposition, he removed the notion of matter to a vast distance, and hewed away the chief foundations on which its reality rests; while amidst all this, the notion of the infinite all-perfect Being, as immanent in his creation, attained a predominance great and all-absorbing, in proportion as the others were weakened and diminished."* This theory was carried out by Malebranche, Spinoza and others, who maintained that the human mind sees all things in God, and that God himself is our intelligible

* Morell.

world. It required but a single step further to the conclusion, that God is the universe, and the universe is God. And since men are the most exalted beings of which philosophy gives us any information, they are peculiarly divine.

This false philosophy had now reached the climax of human presumption. "Christ," said Hegel "is not the only God-man, he is not even so in any especial manner. The idea of God-man belongs to all mankind. There is a universal incarnation of God, which does not proceed from Christ, and which renders all men essentially equal to Christ." The eloquent Merle D'Aubigne gives a vivid picture of the progress of this impious philosophy in the following language :

"They had gone very far, but the limit was not yet reached. The German youth—I mean those who were grouped around these doctors—were hurrying down a steep descent which terminated in the abyss of Atheism. This they quickly reached, nay, even rushed beyond it. Then began in Germany a fearful race of intellects, each striving to outdo the other in impiety. Scarcely had one of these rebellious spirits reached a certain stage of irreligion, when another started off to outrun him, and assert falsities still more diabolical. Strauss had stripped Christianity of every positive and historical element. Bruno Bauer, a theologian likewise, went still farther. He stigmatized the "theology of the heart," the *pectoral* theology as he called it, and exposed what he termed the theological shamelessness or indecencies (*schamlosigkeit*;) and, rejecting Christianity altogether, held it up to the ridicule of his countrymen.

A general idea of religion still remained. But then came forward Feurbach, another of those champions of impiety, who undertook to deliver his nation from the "illusion of religion." And scarcely had the wretched man arrived at this pitch of atheism, when he was overtaken by another still bolder man than himself, Max Stirner, who as he passed on, jeered at him, calling him a *priest* (Pfaffen,) a superstitious man, seeing that he had allowed one idol to subsist:—*the love of mankind!* "Down," he cries, "down with this superstition also! Egoism, selfishness! that is all that is left. Behold the supreme ruler of the world!" All these forms of impiety have thus devoured each other. Anti-christianism has been swallowed up by atheism, and this in turn by egoism. This Satanic principle has asserted itself to be the ultimate expression of human wisdom. These are "clouds without water, carried about of winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame: wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

Such is the German pantheistic philosophy. Both of these systems of philosophy encounter insuperable difficulties, such as the following:

1st. They are inconsistent with *the marks of design*, which everywhere meet the eye. In tens of thousands of instances, we see means adapted to ends, and one thing adapted to another. The eye is adapted to the light, and the light to the eye. The atmosphere is adapted to the lungs, and the lungs to the atmosphere. Every animal body is a wonderfully complicated machinery with its thousand adaptations; and the human body is "fearfully,

wonderfully made.” The further we extend our investigations, the more we are filled with wonder at unnumbered and innumerable manifestations of design. Nay, more — we see everywhere the evidences of *benevolent* design — of a design to promote the happiness of mankind. We pursue our investigations, until we are ready to exclaim, with the Psalmist — “O, Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”

It is no answer to this argument to say, that all these things are *but the development of the laws of nature*. We see ten thousand evidences of benevolent design; and common sense compels us to ascribe them to an intelligent, benevolent designer. By the laws of nature we must understand either *the mere fact*, that certain things happen under certain circumstances, or a power which efficiently produces such results. If we attach to the phrase the former meaning; then to say, that what we see is but the development of the laws of nature, is simply saying it exists, without accounting for its existence. If we attach the latter meaning, then *mere power* does not account for what we see. The universe presents not only the results of power, but of *intelligence* and *benevolence*, controlling power. We cannot stop, therefore, till we get back to the infinitely wise and powerful Jehovah — the great Architect of the Universe. All creation rises up, and with ten thousand voices proclaims both these systems of philosophy impiously false.

2nd. Both of these systems are contradicted by man's *moral sense*. That there is such a distinction between the feelings and actions of men, as that

expressed by the words *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *bad*, no man doubts — no man *can* doubt. Every man believes, and the very nature of his mind compels him to believe, that there are some things that ought to be done, and some that ought not; that the former are to be approved, the latter to be condemned. A sense of obligation, of accountability, every one feels; no one can escape it. But if there is no God, and if the mind is nothing but organized matter, working according to fixed laws; the words *right* and *wrong*, *virtue* and *vice*, express what is false and absurd. One might as well condemn a man for having weak eyes, as a bad heart. Or if the Universe is God, and men are the most exalted part of the Universe, to whom are they accountable? Whose laws do they transgress? What obligations can they disregard? The human soul rises up from the inmost depths of its nobler nature to pronounce both these systems most false and most degrading. The philosophers themselves, whilst elaborating them, were warring against all that was noble in their own souls.

3rd. These systems can offer *no hope for the future*. For if the soul is organized matter, the death of the body is necessarily its death. And what can Pantheism reveal concerning the future? The French at the time of the terrible revolution, inscribed upon the gates of their cemeteries — “Death is an eternal sleep;” but in spite of the degrading sentiment, the soul, true to its immortal nature, panted for endless life, and anxiously sought to see beyond the veil of time. It is not a matter of choice with any of us, whether we will feel solicitude for the future, whether we shall desire immortality. We cannot avoid it. The

delirium of passion may, for a time, banish or conceal the desire ; and we may insanely exclaim — “ Let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die.” But the hours of calm reflection will come, when the longings of the soul for immortality will be felt ; and it will trample under foot the philosophy that enshrouds the eternal future in midnight gloom.

4th. The effects of both these systems *upon morality*, proclaim them false. That the truth, known and embraced, tends to produce virtue and happiness, is a proposition which, as already stated, so commends itself to every one's intellect and conscience, that it scarcely needs or admits of proof. That opinions which produce the opposite effects, are false, or if true, are better unknown, is, if possible, still clearer. The French philosophy bore abundant fruits. Having degraded men to the level of mere animals, and released them from all obligation to God and to man, and blotted out all hope of future happiness, it urged them forward in the mad pursuit of sensual enjoyment. It broke every tie that bound man to man ; it degraded marriage to the level of a civil contract, to be broken at pleasure ; it abolished the Christian Sabbath, and in the height of insanity, enthroned Reason in the person of a harlot ! What was there left to support civil government ? Is it wonderful, that when this philosophy had descended to the masses of the people, and corrupted them, the Revolution broke forth like a mighty tempest ? Is it strange that licentiousness reigned uncontrolled, and that blood flowed in torrents ? But who that saw, or has read of the fearful effects of the Sensational Philosophy, could mistake it for truth ? The history of the human race affords not a more striking

illustration of the degrading influence of depravity on the mind, than the prevalence of this philosophy. One would have thought, that the discovery, if supposed to be made, that the present life terminates the being of men, would have been both humiliating and painful—that the announcement, that they are mere animals, would have been followed by a sense of deep degradation in those who admitted it. But French writers of brilliant talents raised a shout of triumph at the imagined discovery, *that they had no souls!*—that they were nothing more than animals; and would die like their dogs!—that the highest aim of life is sensual pleasure, and its end annihilation!

The effects of the German philosophy have been little less demoralizing. It has no moral principles. It fills the mind with insane pride and presumption, and leaves the appetites and passions uncontrolled. Amongst the Germans who inhabit our own country, we see its degrading and alarming tendencies. They have not, indeed, entered into the abstruse speculations of professed philosophers; but they have adopted their *conclusions*, and show a hearty good-will to reduce them to practice.

But a reaction has taken place in Germany, as well as in France. Men have become alarmed at the fearful impieties to which their speculations have brought them, and at the fruits of the principles they had adopted. Infidelity has thus refuted itself.

3. The only other system of infidel philosophy which remains to be noticed is *Phrenology*. It originated with two infidel physicians, Gall and Spurzheim. It professes to give a complete system of mental and moral science. The following are its leading princi-

ples, viz : 1. The brain is the organ of the mind. 2. The brain is a congeries of organs, containing a distinct organ for each faculty, sentiment or propensity of man. Thus there are organs for the manifestation of the animal appetites; and there are intellectual and moral organs. 3. The strength of each faculty, sentiment or propensity, compared with the other faculties &c. of the same individual, is in proportion to the size of its particular organ, compared with the other organs of the same brain. 4. Each organ is increased in size, and therefore, in strength, by exercise, just as the right arm of a blacksmith becomes larger than the left. 5. The relative size of the different organs can be ascertained, and consequently the character of each individual can be known, by the protuberances and indentations on the skull.

Such are the leading principles of Phrenology. It is adapted to reach the masses of the people; for it converts a dry and abstruse science into a matter of *touch* and of *mathematical calculation*. Traveling lecturers, never suspected of being philosophers, have gone through the country, making known their discoveries, and amusing their audiences by being blind-folded, and examining the heads and describing the characters of individuals who were willing to submit to the operation. It came, not as an enemy of Christianity, but as a friend, offering the Christian ministry its aid in rightly expounding the Scriptures; and not a few were thus induced to give it a favorable reception.

I cannot here go into a particular examination of this system of Philosophy. This I have done in a book published several years ago. It is sufficient to

expose that feature of it which leads necessarily to infidelity. Phrenology makes the *moral character* of men depend upon the shape of the brain, just as much as the intellect and the appetites. If the organ of veneration is large, the individual is disposed to be religious; if small, the reverse. If the organ of conscientiousness is large, he will be regardful of right; if small, he cannot be trusted. Gall and Spurzheim found a young man in one of the prisons of Berlin, whose brain was so badly formed — his Acquisitiveness being extremely large, and his moral organs very small — that they advised, he should never be set at liberty, “*as they thought it impossible he could abstain from stealing.*” Combe says — “Every Phrenologist knows, that the brains of the New Hollanders, Charibs and other savage tribes, are distinguished by great deficiencies in the moral and intellectual organs;” and he expresses the opinion, that, “*with their present brains,*” they cannot be civilized. The same author says — “the fact that this organ (conscientiousness) is occasionally deficient in individuals in whom the organs of the intellect are amply developed and the animal propensities strong, accounts for the unprincipled baseness and moral depravity exhibited by some men of unquestionable talents.” Disease is also said by Phrenologists to be a cause of sin. “Much of the wickedness of mankind,” says Fowler, “is on a par with insanity. It is the offspring of physical disease. It is caused by the sickness of the organs of the erring faculties, not by depravity of purpose.”

Now, if the moral character of men is dependent on the comparative size of certain parts of the brain,

and upon the health or diseased condition of those parts ; they are not accountable for their feelings or for their actions ; and there is in truth no such thing as *virtue* or *vice*. It is absurd to say of men, that their character is good or bad ; and that their conduct is right or wrong. All the noble powers of the mind are nothing more nor less, than *animal instincts*. And hence it is, that Gall, Spurzheim and Combe could study Phrenology as well by examining the skulls of horses, dogs and cats, as those of men, and felt no difficulty in reasoning from the one to the other ! Thus Combe says of the organ of benevolence — “ This organ is found in the lower animals ; when largely developed they are mild and docile ; whereas, when it is deficient, they are vicious, ill-natured and intractable.” Dr. Gall observed, that this organ is larger in the head of the lion, than of the tiger, and larger in the head of the dog, than of the wolf and hyena.

There is no truth more universally admitted, than that men are not accountable for their *physical organization*, or for any consequences flowing legitimately from it. A man with defective eyes is not bound to see clearly ; nor does any one deserve praise for the goodness of his eyes, or for the strength of his arm. The man of weak intellect is not criminal because it is not stronger. If, then, a man’s veneration, or benevolence, or conscientiousness depends upon his physical organization, as much as the weakness of his eyes or his arms ; how can he be more accountable for the one, than for the other ? How can the words *right* and *wrong* be properly applied to either ? If a certain part of the brain of the young man in the Berlin prison, was so small,

relative to another part, that he could not avoid stealing; how can we say, that stealing in such a case is wrong?

It does not meet the difficulty to say—that the defective organs may be cultivated, and thus enlarged. For this implies, that the mind may act, not only independently of its organs, but against them—that the young Berlin prisoner could not only abstain from stealing, but could enlarge his moral organs. But according to Phrenology, the larger organs always control; and besides, it has discovered *no organ of will*. The conduct of man, therefore, is simply the result of the action of a number of unequal physical forces.

Phrenology, legitimately carried out, is not a whit better than the Sensational Philosophy. It not only destroys the sense of accountability, but furnishes the transgressor with the very best of all excuses for his conduct, viz: that it is the legitimate and necessary consequence of his physical organization. We were not surprised, therefore, that a Professor in one of the Medical colleges, of Cincinnati, a zealous advocate of Phrenology, went into court and testified, that the head of a certain woman, on trial for poisoning a whole family, was so defectively formed, that she was not properly accountable for her conduct! A similar application of this degrading philosophy has been attempted in France. Let it prevail, and the very foundations of morality must be overturned; and men, degraded to the level of animals, will indulge their appetites and passions without restraint.

But here, happily, *human consciousness* comes to our help. Every man feels and therefore knows, that his morals do not depend on his physical organi-

zation ; as his appetites and his intellect do. The feeling of just accountability is so deeply seated in the human soul, that no false philosophy, however plausible, can eradicate it. Every individual has in his inmost soul conclusive evidence of the falsity of phrenology, so far as it pretends to find in the structure of the brain the leading traits of moral character.

Intimately connected with the popularity of Phrenology has been that of Mesmerism. By its mysterious power the phrenological organs were excited ; and the individual would benevolently give away all he had, or fight, or sing, according to the wish of the mesmerizer. Then the two were identified in their sensations, so that if one ate salt, the other tasted it. Then the thoughts of the mesmerizer became by the power of his will the perceptions of the person mesmerized. Finally, in the onward progress of this *sublime science*, as it was called, the wonders of *clairvoyance* astonished mankind. The mind of the person in the mesmeric sleep, cut loose from the mesmerizer, and freed from the body, wandered to distant places, and even to distant worlds, and reported all it saw and heard. Nay — all knowledge, past and present, seemed to be poured into the mind by the amazing virtue of the mesmeric fluid ! The most remarkable display of the wonders of clairvoyance, which I have seen, is in a series of lectures professedly delivered by the somewhat celebrated Andrew Jackson Davis, whilst in a mesmeric sleep, and published in a volume of 782 pages. In these lectures, he gives us the history of the formation of the world, the gradual development of the several species of animals in the ascending scale, until the name *man* became applied to the

highest and last, with a particular account of their physical structure. He visited the different planets, and he gives descriptions of their inhabitants, their personal appearance, modes of life, together with an account of the animals, plants and the like. He gives learned criticisms upon the different books of the Bible, deciding what is true and what is false. And, which is very remarkable, we have it gravely certified in the preface of this volume, that Davis never had more than six months of schooling and is quite destitute of human learning! Heretofore it has been supposed, that to become a true philosopher, required long and laborious study and research; but Davis went to sleep and dreamed more philosophy than ever before entered the mind of one man, or the minds of all men together!

One would have thought, that a science so sublime, and giving so easy access to all kinds of knowledge, would never be thrown into the shade. Can human progress reach anything higher? Alas! we have lived to see an astonishing retrograde movement. Instead of mesmeric revelations, we have now *spirit-rappings!* Yes—and men and women in the middle of the 19th century, sit from night to night beside tables, listening in breathless silence to certain singular *raps*, and spelling out, letter by letter some trifling revelation from the spirit-world! But this process was too tedious. So we soon had speaking and writing mediums; and the spirits of deceased men and women come and deliver lectures, or write letters for the instruction of those yet in the body! In a word, we have got back again to the witchcraft and demonical possessions, which have abounded in all pagan countries, as far back as history can carry us.

Now, there are two considerations which, one would suppose, would protect sensible men against this shallow imposture, viz :

1st. It stands associated with an *atheistic philosophy*, utterly false in its fundamental principles, refuted by ten thousand facts. The harmonial philosophy of which A. J. Davis, so recently soaring amongst the stars, is the author, acknowledges no God but nature, and it proceeds upon the *development hypothesis*, which Geology has completely exploded. It asserts a *law of progress* in human nature, which the whole history of man contradicts. It is demonstrated to be false by the ten thousand marks of benevolent design, which everywhere meet the eye. "The fool hath said in his heart, no God."

2nd. The pretended revelations from spirits, if we admit them to be real, are perfectly uncertain. Neither the medium nor others can determine whether the spirit making communications is a good or a bad spirit — whether he tells truths or lies. He may pretend to be the spirit of your father, your mother, your husband or your wife ; and he may give astonishing details of your previous history. But might not a bad spirit know all these things? And might he not tell you truth enough to gain your confidence, in order to lead you astray? Do not wicked men on earth resort to such means? But suppose you are satisfied, the spirit is truthful ; how far is he reliable? May he not be mistaken? It is admitted by the advocates of these revelations, that he may. How, then, are you to know how far to depend upon his communications? It is answered, that our *reason* must be our guide. But how can I reason about things in the spirit world? I have no data. The

very best that can be said of these communications, is — that they are so uncertain as to be perfectly worthless. Looking over the *Spiritual Telegraph* recently, my attention was arrested by an article headed — “Astonishing Predictions — Revelations from the Spirit World.” It is a communication from a man who professes to have been “impressed” by the spirit of Napoleon Bonaparte, to utter the following predictions, viz: “Ere three months have passed, dating from this hour, the assassination of a crowned head will astonish and bewilder the magnates of Europe, and overturn an empire. In another quarter a traitor to his King, but a loyal man to his God, and to his fellows, will turn his sword against his master, and raise the banner of the people: this will occur sometime after the first event spoken of.” This prediction was uttered on the evening of the 29th of November last; so we shall soon see its truth tested. But the medium himself speaks discouragingly. He says — “As for the predictions, I neither adopt them, nor can I say I have much faith in their fulfilment. I spoke as I was impressed to speak. After falling from my lips, they are no longer my property. If, however, these declarations are untruthful, one of three things will be proved — either that I am an unreliable medium; or that a dishonest spirit impressed me; or that my own mind is under the influence, at certain times, of some mysterious power, of which I have no conscious knowledge.” This is an example of the reliability of spirit communications. What are they worth? Would any sensible man act upon them, even in regard to worldly interests? How long will men trifle with their most sacred duties and their eternal interests?

I have now given a very brief outline of the leading forms of infidelity, which have gained prominence in the world. I desire now to call attention to a most significant fact, viz: *that, if we except Deism, every one of these systems of infidelity is the fruit of FALSE PHILOSOPHY.* The Sensational Philosophy, the Idealistic Philosophy and Phrenology have alike failed to establish their claims, and are rejected by the most eminent philosophers, as fundamentally false. No one can wonder that false systems of mental and moral science should lead their advocates to reject the sacred Scriptures. Sound philosophy, true science, never yet made any man an infidel.

It is an instructive fact, too, that the gross infidelity of France and Germany have never gained the ascendancy in England and Scotland. The Sensational Philosophy, indeed, originated in Great Britain; but it did not find there a soil in which it could grow. Why not? Because the Scotch Metaphysics steered clear of the rock on which the German and French philosophers split. They made no attempt to explain how the mind through the senses communicates with the outer world. It is a matter of *common sense*, said Reed, that when I see an object, I see it. It is as reasonable to trust one's senses, as one's consciousness. Perception, as a *fact*, is clear; the *mode* of it is incomprehensible. This is sound philosophy. It is *Bible* philosophy; for the Bible abounds with great practical doctrines, which, as to their *modes*, are profoundly mysterious. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the influences of the Holy Spirit. Men accustomed to receive the *facts* of

Revelation without attempting to comprehend *the how* of them, are prepared to study philosophy on the same principles. The Scotch Metaphysics, in precise accordance with the Scriptures, recognized the existence of the immaterial soul and the material body. It recognized, without attempting to explain, the action of the mind upon, and through the body. It was content to enquire into the phenomena of consciousness without comprehending the mysterious union of the two natures. This philosophy, advocated by Reid, Stuart and Brown, gained the ascendancy both in Great Britain and in America; and that ascendancy it still holds. This sound philosophy saved Scotland, England and America from the degrading infidelity which overran France and Germany. I repeat the thought — it is “philosophy falsely so called,” that leads men of infidelity. True science confirms the claims of Christianity.

Is it probable, that infidelity will yet prevail? Or do the signs of the times point to its speedy overthrow? The following considerations will aid us in answering the question :

1st. Infidelity has assumed every possible ground, and has been driven from every position. It has looked abroad on the glorious works of God, and proclaimed them a sufficient revelation. It has looked in on the nature of man, and proclaimed, that there is no soul, no God, no immortality, no religion,—that man is only an *animal*, formed by chance, whose chief end is to eat, drink and die. It has looked again, and in its profound reasonings has concluded — that everything is God, and man is especially divine, owing allegiance to no higher being. Again it spoke, and bade us look upon the protu-

berances and indentations of the skull, and into the brain, and there find all that is good and bad in man, and learn how to produce a real millennium by improving the cerebral organs and skulls of men. Then it soared aloft on the mesmeric *aura*, and profound stupor taught unearthly wisdom! Weary of the sublime follies of Mesmerism, it became humble and very religious, professed to feel its need of daily revelations, and condescended to listen with docility to *raps* on tables and doors, to watch the mysterious tippings of tables, and to spell out, letter by letter, the strange revelation. Then it invited the unknown spirit to take possession of a human being, as Satan did of the serpent, and speak through him or her.

Thus infidelity has in turns asserted everything but the truth, and then denied its own assertions; and it has ended by leading its deluded votaries to the old, exploded folly of demoniacal possessions! Is there any new position it can take? It has traveled over the whole territory from the learned speculations of Deism to the "old wives' fables" of spirit-rappings! Is it not time, that men should be humbled by their philosophical follies, and sit down at the feet of the great Teacher? What have they accomplished by the learned and laborious speculations of centuries? "Esteeming themselves wise they became fools." But on what foundation can infidelity plant itself, so as to rise again? Its resources are fairly exhausted, and it must surrender at discretion.

2nd. The character of *the advocates* of Infidelity is greatly changed. The Deistical writers of England, in the 17th century, were men of talents, learning and influence. The French Atheists were, many of

them, men of brilliant talents. The authors of the German philosophy were men whose names will go down to posterity. But who are the champions of infidelity now? With a few exceptions, they are men of no learning. The world, it would seem, is now to be enlightened by sleeping, table-tipping philosophers! The men of science, in the different departments, are not the advocates of infidelity.

There is, indeed, one aspect of modern infidelity which demands more attention than it is receiving. It has descended amongst the masses of the people. This is especially true of foreigners who have settled amongst us. And the spirit-rapping delusion is well adapted to mislead the ignorant. It is not cold and powerless, as Deism, Atheism or Pantheism. It professes to receive constant revelations. It pretends to hold communication with departed friends, and thus gets hold of some of the strongest feelings of human nature. And though its reign may be short, yet if the passions of the multitude should be swayed, the results may be terrible.

3rd. Christianity has grown stronger in every conflict with infidelity, and with every succeeding age. Whilst infidels have been ever changing their ground, and pulling down at one time what they had built up at another, Christians have stood firmly on the same ground, and strengthened all their positions. The progress of science, fatal to all false systems of religion, has only strengthened Christianity. Often has infidelity shouted in triumph, when some department of science, whilst yet in its infancy, has seemed to throw a shade on the authority of the Bible; but further investigations, provoked by the attack, have effectually silenced its boasting.

At one time, Chronology was triumphantly arrayed against the Bible. The Chinese, it was alleged, had records extending further back, than the beginning of time, according to Moses. The matter was carefully investigated; and infidels were silenced. Astronomy, too, was called to testify against the Bible. Yet I recently had the pleasure of hearing a lecture from one of the first astronomers in America, in which he demonstrated the inspiration of the Scriptures from the remarkable correspondence of the language of Job, Isaiah and other inspired writers with the latest discoveries of Astronomy. But to no one science did infidelity appeal with so much confidence, as to Geology. This science, it was contended, established the fact, that the earth is many millions of years older, than Moses makes it; and the fact that the different kinds of animals and man were *developed*, not *created*. Animal life, said infidel Geologists, began at the lowest possible point, and by the law of development arrived at its present state. To those persons who desire to glory in a distinguished ancestry, one would think, it would be mortifying to be obliged to find their real ancestry amongst fishes or worms. But in more than one instance, men claiming to be learned, have been willing to degrade their own nature, in order to deny the truth of Revelation.

Now, as to the age of the world, it is sufficient to say — that the Bible numbers amongst its firmest believers some of the most eminent Geologists, who can see no discrepancy between the Mosaic account of the creation of the world, and the conclusions warranted by Geology. This science, moreover, is yet in its infancy. It has already several times

reviewed and corrected its conclusions; and in its further progress, its harmony with the Scriptures will undoubtedly become still more apparent.

Concerning the development hypothesis, Hugh Miller, one of the most eminent Geologists, affirms — that its origin was most unscientific. “In the first place,” says he, “it existed as a wild dream ere Geology had any being as a science. It was an antecedent, not a consequent,—a starting assumption, not a result. No one will contend that Maillet was a Geologist. Geology had no place among the sciences in the age in which he lived, and even no name. And yet there is a translation of his *Tellia-med* now lying before me, bearing date 1750, in which I find very nearly the same account given of the origin of animals and plants as that in the ‘Vestiges,’ [an infidel work] and in which the sea is described as that great and fruitful womb of nature in which organization and life first began.” Of this development hypothesis, he further says — “It is not the illiberal religionist, that rejects and casts it off,—it is the inductive philosopher. Science addresses its asserters in the language of the possessed to the sons of Sceva the Jew:—‘the astronomer I know, and the geologist I know; but who are ye?’” What then has been the result of true scientific investigation. Let the same learned writer answer — “The infidel who, in this late age of the world, would attempt falling back on the fiction of ‘an infinite series,’ would be laughed to scorn. They all began to be. But how? No true geologist holds by the development hypothesis;—it has been resigned to sciolists and smatterers;—and there is but one other alternative. They began to be, *through the mira-*

cle of creation.”* Thus has Geology in its onward progress triumphantly refuted the absurd theory by which infidelity sought to overthrow Revelation, and demonstrated the doctrine of the Bible, that all things were originally created in maturity.

The researches of the antiquarian, too, have added confirmatory testimony to the truth of the Bible. Layard has dug up amongst the ruins of Nineveh, records most strikingly confirmatory of some of the leading facts in Scripture history, particularly the account of the war between Sennacherib and Hezekiah. Eastern travelers, likewise, see in every direction the evidences of the accuracy with which the inspired writers have referred to the geography of the countries, and the manners and customs of the people.

Meanwhile, each succeeding age has been marked by the fulfilment of prophecy. The fishermen still spread their nets on the rocks of Tyre. Babylon has been swept as with the besom of destruction. Jerusalem is desolate; and the Jews, miraculously preserved as a people distinct from all others, wander in all lands, and still look for the time of return to the land of their forefathers. Romanism and Mahometanism have risen, prospered, and are now, toward the close of the prophetic period, tottering to their fall.

Thus whilst Infidelity has successively assumed every possible position, asserting and denying the same thing, and assailing the Scriptures in the name of science; Christianity has triumphantly met it at every point, has been strengthened mightily by the

*Foot Prints of Creator, pp. 201—302.

progress of science, and confirmed by the fulfilment of prophecy. Infidelity has made itself contemptible; Christianity is stronger than ever before.

4th. Christianity is now the great patron of learning, the world over, and has control of very many of the most flourishing and influential Institutions. The first Colleges and Universities of our own country have clergymen for their presidents, and christian men for professors. What has infidelity done for education? Of what important institutions has it the control? It gained the ascendancy, some years ago, in Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky.; and, though richly endowed, it speedily went down. It was designed, that infidelity should reign in the Virginia University; but Christianity has entered there. Most of its professors, and many of its students are professing christians; and a very distinguished Presbyterian minister fills the chair of mental and moral science.* Under the elevating influence of Christianity, the University flourishes as it never flourished before. Not only has it gained the controlling influence in the instruction of the young, but the evidences of Christianity is now one of the regular studies in the classical course.

What is true of our country, is to a considerable extent true of other Protestant countries. Infidelity, it is true, invaded not only the literary institutions, but even the theological seminaries of Germany; but it has borne its fruits, and a reaction has commenced. Soon Christianity will resume its place in the seats of learning, from which it was temporarily expelled.

* Rev. Dr Wm. McGuffey.

5th. Christianity has borne *its fruits* ; and they prove it divine. It is seen to exert a salutary influence on the morals and the happiness of individuals, of families, of communities, and of nations. The most powerful, free and prosperous nations on the globe are precisely those where the Bible has most influence over public sentiment, and in moulding the character of the people. Christianity leads to a pure and peaceful life and a happy death. In the hour of sore trial, it comes as an angel of mercy to minister to the sorrowful ; and in the hour of death, it throws its clear light on the bright future, and fills the soul with joyful hopes. What multitudes of believers of every age and class, have sung the song of triumph, when the cold death sweat had gathered on their brow.

Do not the past history and the present aspects of infidelity and of Christianity justify us in the conclusion, that the former has had its day, and that the triumph of the latter is certain and nigh at hand ? The downfall of Popery in Europe may be followed by the prevalence of infidelity for a brief period ; for the people have learned to hate Christianity, supposing Popery to be Christianity. But their mistake is being rapidly corrected ; and they will soon see the difference.

LECTURE V.

The State and Prospects of the Church Catholic.

The signs of the times seem distinctly to point to the speedy overthrow of Romanism and Mahometanism ; and infidelity, having assumed every possible ground, and asserted all manner of contradictions, seems to have sunk so low, that it can never rise again. Christianity, meanwhile has strengthened its positions, and now stands prepared triumphantly to assert its claims to the confidence of men. But the Church is the divinely appointed agent for the evangelization of the nations. She is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” To her ministry the great commission was given, and to them the promise made — “Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.” To the Church, the exhortation is addressed — “Awake, awake ; put on thy strength — put on thy beautiful garments.”* To the Church God says — “Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee — And the Gentiles shall

* Isaiah, 52:1.

come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”†

It is, then, an interesting question — how far the Church is now prepared, or is becoming prepared to do the great work committed to her. The overthrow of Romanism, Mahometanism and Paganism will throw open the whole world to the Gospel. Even now “the fields are white to the harvest.” A vastly larger portion of the world than ever before is accessible to the christian ministry. The success of British arms has opened the way for the preaching of the Gospel to the millions of India; China with its teeming population waits for light; and the benighted millions of Africa seem willing to welcome the missionary amongst them. But yet if the Church is not prepared, or is not rapidly becoming prepared to go forth on her high mission; darkness must still cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. I propose, then, in the present lecture to take a general survey of the Church, and to enquire what are “the signs of the times,” so far as she is concerned. Let me first make one or two preliminary statements.

1. Jesus Christ has but *one* Church on the earth. The word *church* is frequently used in the Scriptures, in a limited sense, to signify a body of Christians scripturally organized, worshipping in one place. In this sense there are many churches. Thus we read of the church at Rome, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and of the churches of Asia. But all the particular churches, holding to “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,” constitute the *one Church* of Christ. “On this rock,” said our

† Isaiah, 60: 1-3.

Lord, "will I build my Church." "Christ," says Paul, "loved the Church, and gave himself for it." This one Church is, "the bride, the Lamb's wife." A distinction is sometimes made, and properly, between the *visible* and the *invisible* Church; the former being the church as organized in the world, consisting of all who profess the true religion; the latter consisting of all the elect of God who have been, or will be saved. In the present discourse I speak only of the *visible Church*.

2. The visible Church is not confined to any one denomination of professing Christians, but embraces all those denominations that hold the *fundamental doctrines* of the Gospel. In seeking to determine the boundaries of the church, it is of great importance to guard against two extremes into which many have run.

The first is that of so drawing the line as to exclude a portion of the family of God. It is small enough, at best; and no true Christian, one would think, would be willing to make it appear smaller than it is, or to refuse to hold fellowship with those whom the Savior owns. God forbid, that we should ever practically excommunicate any of the true and faithful children of our heavenly Father.

The second extreme is that of acknowledging as christian churches any of those professedly religious bodies that reject the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. We are in the more danger of doing this, because both errorists and worldly men make loud professions of liberality, and immediately raise the cry of bigotry and intolerance, when faithful Christians refuse to compromise truth and conscience. It requires oftentimes no little moral courage to bear

“ the reproach of Christ.” But the reasons against acknowledging heretical bodies are conclusive. For, in so doing, we confirm them in their delusions; because our conduct tells them, that we regard them as Christians, when in truth we are persuaded they are the enemies of the cross, and likely to perish. And then we deceive others that have not the knowledge we have. They see us treat those heretical bodies as Christians, and they very naturally conclude, that in those bodies and under their ministry they may be saved. In the third place, we cripple the energies of the Church, and hinder her success in evangelizing men. The subtlety of the devil has never been more remarkable, than in the plausible religious errors which he has contrived to introduce into the Church to destroy its peace, mar its purity and impair its strength. “ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”* We cannot too distinctly keep in view the great Bible principle, that true religion is the hearty reception of *the truth* and obedience to it. “ And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”† It is the more important that Christians be guarded on this point in these last days; for as the time draws nigh for the great religious changes to which we look forward, dangerous errors, putting on the appearance of

* 2 Cor. 11: 13-15.

† John 8, 32.

extraordinary zeal, will certainly multiply. For we are warned that there will be false teachers, "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them;" and that "many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of."† We must take heed, therefore, that we do not dishonor our Lord, and afflict his Church by extending fellowship to those whose business it will be, not to build up, but to pull down.

But how shall we so draw the line as to avoid these extremes. Most certainly we are not to look for *perfection*, either in faith or in practice. If *every degree* of error should exclude from the Church, it would have few, if any members. The Scriptures seem evidently to require us to acknowledge as Christian Churches all those bodies holding the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and having a regularly ordained ministry. But what doctrines are *fundamental*? I answer, all those doctrines are fundamental, the belief of which is essential to a compliance with the terms of salvation. Those terms are "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."* Now, *repentance* depends very much upon the view taken of the depravity of the heart and the sinfulness of the life. For if one should believe that he has but little depravity, and has sinned but little, his repentance will be very slight. The doctrine of the entire depravity of human nature, then, is fundamental. Faith toward Jesus Christ is the hearty belief of *the truth*

* Ac's 20: 21

† 2 Pet. 2: 1-2.

respecting him. But we cannot believe the truth respecting him, until we have learned *who he is*, and *what he has done* for our salvation. Therefore the doctrine of his humanity and Divinity, and the doctrine of the atonement, are fundamental. But since Christ came not to save us *in* our sins, but *from* them; and since he delivers us from sin by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine of the Spirit's influence on the heart is fundamental. Still further—inasmuch as the salvation of Christ is *from* eternal punishment and *to* eternal life; the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is fundamental. Finally, as the resurrection of Christ was the conclusive evidence of his Messiahship, Paul the apostle teaches us, that the doctrine of the resurrection is fundamental.†

These doctrines and those necessarily implied in them, are fundamental; and wherever in the world we find a church holding them, we find a branch of the Church universal; and it is both our privilege and our duty to acknowledge them as Christian brethren. The different branches of the Church are called by different names, expressive of some peculiarity in their faith, or in their ecclesiastical organization; yet do they constitute one Church. For the unity of the Church does not consist in *the name*, but in the *faith*. Nor is it necessary to the unity of the faith, that all Christians agree in every point. Even the Church of Rome, though boasting of her perfect unity, has been obliged to make an arbitrary distinction between *faith* and *opinion*, and to place under the latter

† 1 Cor. 15: 15-18.

category some very important articles of belief. Until within a few months, the question of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, was left amongst *the opinions*. Now, in the middle of the 19th century, it takes its place, by decree of Pope Pius IX., amongst the *doctrines*, and seems to be regarded as one of the most important. But agreement in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, is all that is necessary to the unity of the Church.

I propose now to enquire, whether there are good reasons to believe, that the Church, consisting of all the evangelical denominations, is becoming prepared for the great work to which she is called. The following considerations will aid us in coming to a satisfactory conclusion.

1. The different denominations of Christians seem, within the last half century, more correctly to understand the commission given by our Savior to his Apostles, and through them to his Church. It is true, that at a very early period after the Reformation, efforts were made to send the Gospel to the heathen. In 1556 fourteen Protestant missionaries were sent by the church of Geneva to plant the Christian faith in America. In 1559, Gustavus Vasa, King of Sweden, made efforts to propagate Christianity in Lapland. In the beginning of the 17th century, the Dutch made considerable efforts to promote Christianity in Ceylon, Java, Amboyna, and Formosa. In the year 1646, the General Court of Massachusetts passed an act to encourage the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians; and at that time that excellent minister, Rev. John Elliot, appropriately called "The Apostle of the

Indians," commenced his labors amongst them. In 1773, that eminent servant of God, Rev. David Brainerd, entered on his labors as a missionary among the Indians, under the patronage of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge. In the early part of the 18th century, Frederick IV., King of Denmark, was induced to send missionaries to the Coromandel coast in the East Indies. In this mission, the excellent C. H. Swartz spent near fifty years. In one of his letters he says, "I am now at the brink of eternity, but to this moment I declare, I do not repent of having spent forty-three years in the service of my Divine Master." The East India Company erected in Madras a monument to his memory; and the Rajah of Tanjore placed his portrait among the pictures of the princes of that country, in his principal hall of audience. About the same time, the Danes commenced their missions amongst the Greenlanders.

These facts will show — that the Church, after the Reformation, did not wholly forget the command to "go, teach all nations." But the Moravians or United Brethren must be regarded as having pre-eminently illustrated the missionary spirit. "It is worthy of particular observation," says Brown in his History of Missions, "that when the Moravians sent forth their first missionaries, the congregation consisted only of about six hundred poor, despised exiles; yet this inconsiderable company made such noble and extensive exertions for the conversion of the heathen, as reflects not only the highest honor on themselves, but indelible disgrace on all the rest of the Christian world. In the short period of eight or nine years, they sent missionaries to Greenland, to

St. Thomas, to St. Croix, to Surinam, to Rio de Berbice, to the Indians of North America, to the negroes of South Carolina, to Lapland, to Tartary, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the Island of Ceylon." Their self-denials, their liberality, their abundant labors and successes afford a bright example to be emulated by Christians in the present age. In the year 1812, they had no fewer than thirty-three settlements among the heathen, in which were employed one hundred and fifty-seven missionaries, under whose instruction there were about twenty-seven thousand four hundred converts.

In the year 1786, the Methodists of England established missions in the West India Islands; and in 1792, a few Baptist ministers, assembled at Kettering in Northamptonshire, united in forming a Society for propagating the Gospel amongst the heathen; soon after which time, that eminent missionary, Rev. Wm. Cary, of Leicester, who had been chiefly instrumental in the organization of the Society, commenced his labors in India.

In 1795, the London Missionary Society was formed. "It consisted," says Brown, "of Christians of various denominations, who came forward in the great cause with a unanimity and a zeal never before witnessed in modern ages. The flame kindled in the metropolis, quickly spread over the whole country; it extended even to the continent of Europe and the shores of America. The institution of the Missionary Society was everywhere hailed as a new era in the history of the Christian world."

The Free Church in Scotland is zealously and successfully engaged in propagating the Gospel among the heathen. Their missions, so far as I am informed,

are chiefly in India and China. The whole christian world has become familiar with the name of Rev. Alexander Duff, and with his College in Calcutta, in which some twelve - hundred native youths are receiving a Christian education, and from which many have already gone forth to diffuse the light they obtained there.

Early in the present century the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized. No other Institution in our country has accomplished so much in sending the Gospel to the heathen. Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed were united in sustaining this Board. Soon after its organization, the Baptist Board of Missions was organized. Within the last twenty years, the Presbyterian Church, Old School, has withdrawn from the American Board, and has organized a Board of Foreign Missions of its own, which is doing its work with great energy. The Methodists and Episcopalians are also engaged in the same good work.

Thus, one after another, all the evangelical denominations have heard the Saviour's command, and have gone forth to evangelize the nations. The question now is not which of all the denominations are engaged in this work, but rather whether any are still inactive. It is not merely the organization of missionary boards by all the evangelical denominations, that gives encouragement; but it is the additional fact, that the public sentiment of the churches is decidedly in favor of the missionary work. I do not mean to say — that the importance of this great work is fully appreciated by Christians generally; or that the churches are doing half so much as they could and should do. Far from it. The standard of piety

must rise much higher, before their means and energies shall be called out in evangelizing all nations. But all admit the obligation; and very many, in some degree, discharge it.

And it may be worth while to state the fact, that with the exception of the church of Rome, none but evangelical denominations are, to any extent, engaged in the work of Foreign Missions. Heretical churches, unwilling to encounter the perils and hardships of missionary life, are content to follow in the footsteps of evangelical bodies, and to glean in the fields reaped by others. In this we rejoice. It is well that our missionaries to the heathen are not obliged to combat a false Protestantism in the commencement of their labors.

It is certainly one of the cheering signs of the times, that now when the providence of God is throwing open pagan countries to Christian effort, and when the two great anti-Christian powers which have so long opposed the propagation of the Gospel in Europe and in a large part of Asia, are tottering to their fall; we find the whole evangelical Church in Europe and America fully organized, and prepared to reap the great harvest. Should these denominations receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit (which may God in mercy grant) they will soon make their power felt the world over.

2. The different branches of the Church are gradually becoming separated from the State, and thus prepared to put forth their energies untrammelled for the conversion of the nations. Amongst the causes which have operated disastrously upon the piety and efficiency of the Church since the Reformation, no one probably has been more potent, than

the union of church and State. In Germany it became necessary for the Reformers to seek the protection of the States where they lived, against the intolerance of Popery; and thus the unhappy union was there formed. In England, Henry VIII. was determined to be the visible head of the church, and to exert a controlling influence over its faith and government. Indeed so long had this unhappy union existed during the reign of Popery, that even good men were slow to see the evils of it, and to believe that the purity and efficiency of the Church absolutely required its abrogation. But the providence and the Spirit of God have been working effectively for its overthrow. Whilst the established church of England has been filled with unconverted members and ministers, and its moral power, to a great extent, destroyed; the best men, and the men of greatest influence, have been Dissenters. The names of Baxter, Owen, Watts, Doddridge, Bunyan and others like them will long be venerated, wherever there is a pure Christianity. In Scotland, within the last few years, an event has occurred, the effects of which have been felt all over Europe. The civil authorities interfered with the rights of the church. All petitions for redress, and all remonstrances against the encroachment, proved in vain. Matters came to a crisis at the meeting of the General Assembly, on the 15th of May, 1843. "The grandest spectacle that ever Scotland beheld," says D'Aubigne, "was now preparing. The church was to take leave of the State. The two societies were to give each other the bill of divorcement." The people who had collected in dense crowds to witness the issue, thronged St. Andrew's Church. The

Queen's representative took his seat on the throne, surrounded by his pages and officers. The Moderator opened the meeting with a fervent prayer. "Then a pause ensued — no one spoke; no one stirred. All was silent and motionless. Thousands of anxious hearts were waiting in expectation, and every man seemed to hold his breath, as if in fear of losing one of the words that were now to be uttered in this sacred place, and to decide the destiny of the Church of God." Then the Moderator read the noble protest. It was heard in deep silence. Then was witnessed a scene which produced the most powerful emotions, the effects of which it is difficult to estimate. As the Moderator left the church, more than three hundred ministers and elders — "all that was most eminent in the Church of Scotland for piety, for zeal, and for talent," rose and followed. "The whole people were in a state of unprecedented excitement. A shout, not loud and piercing,—but a shout half suppressed by deep emotion, a shout proceeding from the depths of the heart, resounded in the streets of the Metropolis." Having assembled in a large hall previously prepared, they organized the Free Church of Scotland. The Moderator opened the meeting with a prayer. "During this prayer, sobs were audible, and the most manly faces were bathed in tears. When it ended, the whole multitude stood up to sing the praises of the Lord, and the first hymn of the Free Church arose to heaven, and the Angel of the Covenant offered it before the throne of God. (Rev. VIII. 3)*"

*D'Aubigne's *Gen., Eng. and Scot.* pp. 330—340.

Truly this was a sublime spectacle. Those noble men, for the sake of God's truth, gave up their church edifices, their pleasant manses, and their salaries. The amount of the revenue thus renounced was more than a hundred thousand pounds. They went out to worship in the open fields, and to get a support for their families, as best they could. But the blessing of God rested upon them; and from that day to this, the Free Church of Scotland has exhibited a degree of piety, of liberality, and of energy, which have astonished the world. The result is not doubtful. The day is hastening which will finally separate church and state in Great Britain. The dissenting churches have a piety, a vigour and a power which must secure to them a rapid increase; whilst the established churches must become constantly weaker. The number of those opposed to the establishment is increasing; and the end will surely be gained.

In Switzerland, a scene somewhat similar to that in Scotland was witnessed, a few years since. In Sweden the same great questions are now agitated. Geneva has witnessed similar results. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that the time is nigh, when all the Protestant Churches of Europe will be divorced from the State; and then they will be prepared to obey the command — "Go teach all nations."

In our own happy country, this unhappy union does not exist. Here the Church in all its branches enjoys the protection of the State, but is neither corrupted by its patronage, nor trammelled by its legislation. Here the truth is allowed to show its superiority by meeting error in open and fair combat, and the churches are free to adopt their own plans

for the propagation of the Gospel in pagan and papal countries.

3. The different denominations of evangelical Christians are becoming more united in the work of building up the Kingdom of Christ. Whatever purposes the inscrutable wisdom of God has designed to accomplish by permitting the existing divisions in his Church, they certainly weaken her power over the minds of men, and hinder the progress of the work of evangelization. Within some years past, however, Christians have seemed to look more at the points on which they agree, than at their differences. They discover, too, that the former are both much more numerous and infinitely more important, than the latter. There have, indeed, been some efforts to unite different branches of the Church, which were evidently premature. There is no wisdom in the attempt to throw the different evangelical denominations into one. On many minor points they differ. Whilst they have their separate organizations, these differences need not interrupt their general co-operation, and their Christian fellowship. But if they were thrown together, the result would be discord, not harmony. The day, I rejoice to believe, is approaching, when by the increase of piety and the more correct understanding of the word of God, they will gradually approach and ultimately mingle together as one undivided family.

Meanwhile we rejoice in the increase of brotherly love. The tendency to unity is seen in the fact, that different denominations, with few exceptions, acknowledge the validity of each other's acts and ordinances. Members and ministers pass from one to an-

other without re-baptism or re-ordination. Ministers of different denominations preach for each other, and rejoice in each other's success. The missionaries sent by them to heathen lands meet, and hold sweet converse together. The formation of Evangelical Alliance, whether it shall accomplish much directly toward the spread of the Gospel or not, exhibits the tendency in the minds of Christians, towards fraternal union. The deep interest felt by all denominations for those Christians who are struggling against despotic laws in Europe, shows — that with the more enlightened, the great question is that of Christianity, not that of sect. Not that I would compromise what I regard as God's truth. The way to bring all denominations to unite on the truth, is not to abandon portions of that truth, but kindly and prayerfully to discuss points of difference. Thus misunderstandings may be removed, and errors corrected.

Indeed one of the encouraging signs of the times is — that all subjects are now freely discussed. We may observe a sifting process going on in the different denominations. The Presbyterian Church in this country has had its day of agitation and division; and painful as were many things that happened, they will be overruled for greater good. The "new measures" which, for a time, gave so much trouble, are no more heard of. "The Plan of Union" has been repudiated by the Congregationalists, as well as by Presbyterians. Our New School brethren are turning from "Voluntary Societies" to "Ecclesiastical Boards." And as to doctrines, there seems to be a decided tendency toward the old foundations. **Meanwhile the Old School we trust, have learned**

some important lessons of wisdom by the trials through which they have passed.

In the Episcopal Church, a similar sifting is going on. That portion of its ministers and members who glory in *the church* and in *forms*, more than in the *cross*, are moving towards Rome; and many of them, having gone too far to retrace their steps, have made their submission to the Man of Sin. This process may serve two purposes, viz: It may relieve that church of those who are only an injury to it; and it may direct attention to those parts of the Ritual, where the seeds of Popery lie buried. The more evangelical portion of the Church, in their conflicts with High-Churchism and Puseyism, feel more kindly toward their brethren of other denominations, for they find amongst them a vital piety which contrasts strikingly with the formalism and worldliness which exist amongst their High-Church brethren. The discussion is going forward, both in this country and England; and it must terminate in the separation of the evangelical and unevangelical elements. Then the former will be prepared to co-operate with their brethren in the great work committed to the Church.

Great questions are being discussed amongst the Congregationalists of New England, which, we may hope, will terminate in the firmer belief of the doctrines of the Bible. The Baptists, too, have their controversies, arising from their peculiar views of baptism. The efficacy ascribed to this ordinance by those called Campbellites, has compelled them to discuss anew and more thoroughly the great doctrines of justification and sanctification. And the controversies relative to *Bible-revision*, and the question

whether they can, consistently with their principles, recognize other ministers and churches, are well adapted to raise the inquiry in the minds of the more enlightened and pious, whether those principles are altogether sound. Sometimes God opens the eyes of his people to errors into which they have fallen, by permitting them to be carried out to their logical results. In England the tendency amongst the Baptists towards more enlarged views, is most decided.

Our Methodist brethren, too, have some agitation. The question of slavery has given them trouble, and has divided them; and the question whether their church government is not too *clerical*, must be met and discussed. Meanwhile, those families of Presbyterians who sing only the Psalms, are discussing the terms of closer union. The Dutch Reformed and the Old School Presbyterians are drawing closer to each other.

We may well rejoice in all these agitations, discussions and mutual consultations. Unkind and unchristian feelings may at times arise; but in the end the truth will be gainer; and the Church in her different branches, purged of error, and freed from prejudice, will go forth on her glorious mission, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

4. The Church of Christ has done a great work of *preparation*, and now has in her hands the means of a very rapid advance in the work of evangelizing the nations.

1st. Her missionaries have become thoroughly acquainted with the manners, the habits and the errors of the different nations. This was necessarily

the work of years ; but until it was done every attempt to convince them of their errors and of the truth of Christianity, must be made under great disadvantages.

2nd. They have made themselves familiar with the languages of the different nations, and have translated into them the Bible, and published tracts, religious books and school-books. There is scarcely a language spoken by any considerable number of the human family, into which the whole Bible, or a considerable portion of it, has not been translated. In a number of instances, the Missionaries have *formed* a written language, and then translated the Bible into it. Besides, having mastered these languages, the Missionaries can now preach fluently to the natives in their several tongues, and can more easily impart to other missionaries a knowledge of those languages. This was a tedious and laborious undertaking.

3rd. They have, by God's blessing, made converts, planted churches, and established schools. The Sandwich Islands are now a Christian people, no longer dependent on the American Board of Missions. In Asia Minor, in India, in China, in Africa, churches are organized, schools established, and native youths are going forth to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The first Missionaries, as they prophesied in the valley of dry bones, had their faith severely tried. The time seemed long, before any decided impression was made. But the work of preparation has been done ; and now converts are more rapidly multiplied. The churches already organized become efficient in extending the work. Prejudices have been overcome, and heathen children

come in increasing numbers under Christian instruction.

4th. The Church in Christian lands has the means of carrying forward the good work with greater rapidity. The British and Foreign Bible Society, organized in 1804, and the American Bible Society organized in 1816, are two noble institutions by whose labors copies of the Sacred Scriptures are very rapidly multiplied, and sent abroad amongst the nations. There are many other societies engaged in the same work. Others are sending forth tracts and religious books. Colporteurs are employed in carrying these publications to the doors of the people.

And then the Church has much wealth, much talent, much learning, many literary and religious institutions, in which to train the rising generation. Indeed we may truly say—that God has put into the hands of his people all the means and instrumentalities necessary to the work to which He is now loudly calling them.

There are *three* views which may be taken of this subject. We may compare what has actually been accomplished in the conversion of men, with what remains yet to be done. And this view, I must confess, is discouraging. The true Church of Christ is yet, alas, a comparatively “little flock,” whilst the multitude still close their eyes against the light. Secondly, we may compare what has been accomplished within the last half century, with what was accomplished within the two centuries preceding. This view is more cheering. We find, that the Church has moved forward at far greater speed within the last fifty years, than before; and then we may justly

infer, that in the time to come the rate of progress will be still greater. Thirdly, we may compare the state of the Church and the means and facilities for evangelizing the nations, fifty years ago and now. This view is far more cheering. The Church herself better understands her mission. Her work of preparation is a great work, which puts into her hands immense power. Romanism, Mahometanism, Paganism and Infidelity are on the wane; and the providence of God is opening all countries to the Christian Missionary. Connect with these facts the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit in a remarkable manner in the latter days, and you have before the eye of your faith a brighter prospect than you imagined.

Just here occurs to me a question which has deeply interested my mind, and on which I made a few remarks in a preceding lecture, viz: in the revolutions which are soon to take place, and in the onward progress of the Gospel, what is to become of the Greek Church? Is it to be destroyed, or to be reformed? There are strong reasons for the latter conclusion. The Greek Church, though sunk in great ignorance and superstition, has no head claiming infallibility, and presenting an insuperable barrier in the way of inquiry. The claim of the Church of Rome to infallibility compels her to hold to all the absurd superstitions added to her creed during the dark ages. If she acknowledge error in a single case, the charm is broken; the tie that binds the people together is sundered. With the increasing light she must the more boldly assert, that her darkness is light. It is not so with the Greek Church. Her faith may become more and more

scriptural, without endangering her existence. And then she has never forbidden her people to read the Bible. Indeed many of her priests have favored the circulation of the Scriptures amongst their people ; and wherever the word of God circulates, there will be light. The Greek Church, moreover, though by no means free from the charge of intolerance, has not been drunk with the blood of saints. She has never sent forth her armies, as has Rome, to massacre multitudes of men and women for presuming to read and understand the word of God. No St. Bartholomew massacre disgraces her history. She has had no Inquisitions in whose gloomy dungeons the saints of God have been *worn out* with protracted and cruel tortures. She has no Pope claiming blasphemous titles and honors, “ sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God.”

I see no reason, therefore, why a great Reformation may not take place in the Greek Church. Already a spirit of inquiry exists amongst a portion of her people in Greece and in Turkey : and we may cherish the hope that it will greatly extend. And since it is the province of God to bring good out of evil, may He not, by means of the Eastern war, arouse that Church from the lethargy in which it has so long lain ? The Pope has offered indulgences to those of his subjects, who will pray for the conversion of the Greek Church to Rome ; but we trust God has merciful designs towards it, and that it may yet become a mighty instrument for the evangelization of the nations.

The view I have now presented of the condition of the Church is certainly encouraging. We would greatly err, however, if we should conclude, that

the whole picture is of the same character. I have said, that in past ages the Providence of God and the Holy Spirit have wonderfully co-operated in the work of evangelizing the nations ; but I am sometimes tempted to doubt, whether there is not something ominous in the present aspects of this work. God in his providence is opening the whole world to the Christian ministry ; but the piety of the Church seems too low to furnish either the men or the means to gather the harvest.

Let us not conceal from ourselves the more discouraging aspects of the cause. It is by weighing these candidly that the needful remedy may be discovered and applied. Let us consider the following facts, viz :

1. The preaching of the Gospel is not generally attended with such power, as in the last days we should expect. Not a few ministers preach from year to year without seeing any considerable number converted to God under their ministry ; and even those who are regarded as most eminently successful, are compelled to draw painful contrasts between the amount of labor performed, and the visible results.

2. Although Christian liberality has undoubtedly increased within the last few years ; yet there is no proportion between the wealth and the liberality of Christians. Some there are, I am happy to say, who give "as the Lord hath prospered them ;" but alas, how many there are who have become wealthy, or are rapidly accumulating, who give grudgingly, and curse themselves and their families by hoarding up that which God has given them as his stewards, to use for the promotion of his cause ; thus giving

painful evidence, that "the root of all evil" is in their hearts. Fives and tens are given, where hundreds could be as well given, and where the cause of Christ and of perishing men demands hundreds. There are in the Scriptures two important passages, which few professing Christians have learned to appreciate, viz: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver;" and "It is more blessed to give, than to receive"

3. But comparatively few private Christians make any personal efforts to turn their fellow men to Christ. The large majority have their names on the church records. They go to Church on Sabbath, and receive the communion, when it is administered. They give something, when contributions to benevolent objects are called for, if they be present, and if it be convenient. You cannot charge them with unchristian conduct. But they are rarely seen in a prayer-meeting, or attending any weekly service; and they *never* warn a sinner to flee from the wrath to come, or exhort their brethren to greater zeal and fidelity. You cannot say, they are not Christians; but no one can believe, that their piety is in a healthy state. Their light burns too dimly to disturb the repose of the children of darkness around them; and thh zeal is too cold to give offence to the most worldly. Alas, there are too many, whose conduct proves, that they are supremely worldly, or who by lack of moral principle bring great reproach on the cause of Christ.

4. Worldly professions and avocations are overcrowded with men who profess supreme love to Christ and his cause, but who seem never prayerfully to inquire whether it is not their duty and privilege "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Religious young men in large numbers become merchants, lawyers and physicians, at a time when the cry comes up from every quarter for efficient ministers of the Gospel; and when millions of perishing men are willing to listen to the word of life.

What, then, is the great want of the Church, that she may enter the vast field opened by the providence of God, and efficiently cultivate it? Not more talent, nor more intelligence, nor more wealth. All these she has in abundance. What then is the great want? *It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit!* This would impart a stronger faith, a more fervent love, a deeper humility, a zeal according to knowledge, more importunate prayer, more self-denying and energetic labor. It would deliver Christians from "the love of money," and give them experience of that important truth, that "it is more blessed to give, than to receive." It would impart such elevated enjoyment, that they would no longer soil their garments in search of worldly pleasure. It would clothe the preached word with power; and the enquiry would come from anxious sinners — "What must I do to be saved?" The means and instrumentalities for evangelizing the nations are in the hands of the Church. What she needs is the *unction* and the *mind to work*. I should speak within bounds, if I were to say — that the Church in our day does not put forth the one-tenth part of the power she might wield for the conversion of the world.

The prophecies and the providences of God seem to encourage the hope, that ere long the Spirit will be poured out abundantly upon the Church. The

field has been thrown open by the providence of God. Will He not put it into the hearts of his people to gather the harvest? It is a cheering truth that in some parts of the Church we see the spirit of primitive times. In France and in Italy great numbers of men and women, like the Madias, risk their liberties, if not their lives, in order to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, and that they may enlighten their fellow men. In the Island of Madagascar, the most cruel persecutions have not been able to drive the converts to apostacy. They have shown by their conduct that they do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. It may be, that some severe afflictions will be necessary, before Christians in our favored land will appreciate their privileges, and discharge their duties. Indeed, already have we felt the desolating power of the pestilence, of drought, and of disasters by land, on the river, and on the ocean. Thus is God solemnly saying to Zion—"Awake, awake; put on thy strength." May the people of God obey the warning, before heavier judgments come.

LECTURE VI.

Mission of the United States.

As we contemplate the approaching epoch in the history of our world, and the great changes which must occur in the moral, social and political conditions of man, it becomes a deeply interesting inquiry, *what is to be the future of our own country?* Many considerations awaken in our minds an intense desire to know, as far as we may, what is to be the condition of these United States, during the time when all nations shall be shaken to their centre. The love of country, the fact that this country is to be the home of our posterity, the relations it sustains to great principles essential to the well-being of mankind, and its relations to the cause of Christ, all conspire to impart interest to the investigation upon which we now enter. The solicitude we feel on this subject is the greater, because not a few of the devoted friends of our civil Union have been agitated with most serious apprehensions, that disunion and civil convulsions must soon occur, and that our glorious mission will terminate in disastrous failure. It is not wise to conceal from ourselves any real

dangers that exist. Foreseen they may be avoided. Yet I am disposed to think, that a careful examination of "the signs of the times," encourages the hope, if not the confident belief, that God has a great mission for this nation to fulfil, and that a long and bright career is before it. That it may be so, is our heart's desire and prayer to God.

In the present lecture I propose to consider very briefly — 1st. The leading peculiarities of the United States of America — 2nd. Its mission — 3rd. What are the probabilities that that mission will be accomplished.

Amongst the leading peculiarities of our nation, we notice the following:

1st. Its recent origin. It is not an old nation with new institutions. It is not a fragment of one or more old nations. It is literally *new*. The patriots who formed its constitution and, under God, achieved its independence, have scarcely all passed away. Their children and grand children, who heard from their lips the exciting stories of the Revolution, are yet amongst us. And yet this young nation, in civilization, intelligence, wealth, power and greatness, is inferior to no other. In some most important particulars it acknowledges no equal! The history of the world affords no parallel to the rapid progress of these United States, in all the elements of true greatness.

2nd. Our country is peculiar in the elements of which it was originally composed. Of these the most numerous and influential were English Puritans, Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, Hollanders or Dutch Presbyterians, French Hugonots, who were Presbyterians, and Quakers. These gave character to the

country and its institutions. They were men of the right stamp to lay the foundations of a great republic, for two reasons, viz :

1st. Their religious principles, legitimately carried out, secure to all civil and religious liberty. With them the Bible was the only and complete rule of faith and practice. They acknowledged no infallible expounder of the Bible on the earth; and they put the sacred volume into the hands of all, that they might read and understand. Their forms of ecclesiastical government were republican or democratic. They brought with them from the old world what De Tocqueville calls "a democratic and republican religion," which, as he correctly says — "contributed powerfully to the establishment of a democracy and a republic." 2nd. They were eminently men of sterling moral principle. It was not for the purpose of enriching themselves and their families, that they abandoned the home of their fathers for the wilderness of America. With them the Bible was more precious than rubies; and the service of God and the hopes of heaven were dearer than life. Resolved not to sacrifice principle by conformity to corrupt systems of faith, established by law, they sought in the wilderness an asylum, where they might worship God without interference, and train their families for his service and for heaven. They were not only persons of principle, but of intelligence. Many of them had enjoyed the advantages of education; and they were able to give a reason for the hope that was in them. Never before were such elements combined in the founding of a nation. The history of the world cannot show such a predominance of intelligence and sound moral principle —

the very qualities so essential to the organization of a civil government on correct principles, and to the support of such a government in its earlier struggles. It may well be said of them, as an elegant writer says of the New England pilgrims, that they were "the germ of a great nation wafted by Providence to a predestined shore."

3d. Our nation is peculiar in its civil government. In the first place, the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitutions of the several States, carefully guard the inalienable rights of citizens. No restraints are placed on individual liberty, which are not necessary to the general good. Liberty of conscience, and freedom of speech and of the press are fully protected. Our government, instead of dictating a religious faith to the people, protects every individual in the right to form his own creed. Instead of establishing by law some one sect, and supporting its ministry out of the public treasury, thus arraying all the other denominations against the government, it extends to all equal protection, and leaves ministers of all classes to be sustained by voluntary contributions. Instead of exercising a rigid censorship over the press, it leaves all subjects, political, religious and literary, open to free discussion. And then our Constitutions, however excellent, are left open to amendment, whenever the people may regard them as defective; and the Constitutions of a number of the States have already undergone revision and amendment. The people make the Constitutions; and the people amend them.

Again—the laws of the United States, and of each of the States, are made by the people through their representatives, and may be repealed or

amended according to the desire of the majority. If, therefore, any law or laws be found unjust or injurious to the interests of the people, they hold in their own hands the power and the right to change them.

4. Our country is peculiar in the extent of its territory, in the fertility of its soil, in the number and length of its navigable streams, and in all the elements of greatness. In these respects no country on earth bears comparison with it. Already our civil union numbers thirty-one States; and one of our ablest statesmen has shown, that the line of great States which now stretch half way across our continent in the same latitude, (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri) may be matched by an equal number of States, equally great, between Missouri and California.* Who can tell what multitudes of human beings will, in the course of a few generations, occupy this vast territory? And who can estimate the wealth and the power which this nation must possess, if it continue united and free?

Can it be doubted, that God, who planted our nation on this continent, and gave it so many remarkable peculiarities, has given it some great mission to accomplish for the benefit of mankind? What is that mission? I answer —

1. The first and immediate design of every government, is to secure to its own citizens the highest degree of prosperity. This end of civil government is being attained in our country to a greater extent than in any other. There is no nation where individual liberty is so fully enjoyed, and where there are so many advantages for securing prosperity and

* Hon. T. H. Benton's discourse before Maryland Institute

happiness. We may venture, therefore, to apply to ourselves the language of the Psalmist respecting the Jews—"He hath not dealt so with any nation."

2. It is the mission of our country to demonstrate to all nations, that the utmost freedom of opinion and of discussion, in matters of religion and in matters of State, is not only consistent with the peace and safety of the State and the good of the people, but is decidedly promotive of these ends. It has long been the prevailing opinion in Europe, that the State, in order to be safe, must keep religion under its own control. Consequently civil rulers have regarded it as a part of their duty, or as promotive of their interests, to choose a religious faith for their subjects, and require them to embrace it. As a matter of necessity, in some instances, dissenters are tolerated; but they are generally regarded as dangerous persons, whom it is the interest of the reigning powers to discourage, if not to persecute. Thus the English government selected Episcopacy; and France, Spain and Austria chose Popery, as the national faith. England tolerates and protects dissenters; but the other governments named treat them very much as criminals. What are the results?

In the first place, men of principle—the very men on whom the government should rely for support—are made *rebels*. For such men are not likely to be willing to accept a creed made to their hand, which they *must* receive, or labor under civil disabilities. They feel themselves accountable to God for what they believe, and for what they do. They, therefore, claim the right freely to investigate these all-important subjects, and to act upon their own convictions. Unfortunately civil rulers are not generally qualified

to settle questions either of faith or of conscience. When they undertake to do so, they are likely to make rebels of good men, and hypocrites of bad ones; and then the government must rely for support chiefly on unprincipled men, against men of integrity. In France, Tuscany, Italy and Austria, the very best citizens are watched and persecuted as criminals, and are constrained to cry to God against their oppressors.

In the second place, religion loses its *moral power*. Inducements are held out to unconverted men to enter the church, and even to take upon themselves the ministerial office. Thus darkness mingles with the light, and obscures it. Scandals are multiplied, and men learn to despise religion in the persons of ungodly professors. It is sufficiently difficult at all times to prevent worldly persons from entering the church of Christ. It becomes impossible, when state patronage tempts their cupidity or their ambition.

Church establishments take even from good men motives to activity and self-denial. Ministers of the Gospel are supported just as are civil officers; and Christians, having no occasion to exercise their liberality in supporting the Gospel at home, soon lose the disposition to self-denying efforts to send it abroad.

Church establishments identify religion with the corruptions and oppressions of the State; and thus the people look upon it, not as the richest of God's gracious gifts to a lost world, but as a power in league with the State for the purpose of tyrannizing over them. "In Europe," says DeTocqueville, "Christianity has been intimately united to the powers of the earth. Those powers are now in decay, and it

is, as it were, buried under their ruins. The living body of religion has been bound down to the dead corpse of superannuated polity; cut the bonds which restrain it, and that which is alive will rise once more."

Church establishments, therefore, not only curse the Church, and render it powerless for the purposes for which it was organized; but they curse the State also, by destroying or greatly weakening that moral power which is its only reliable support; and by arraying against it that moral principle which would have most fully sustained it.

Our country is called of God to demonstrate to the nations of the earth, that the civil government never stands so firmly, as when the State is content to discharge its own proper functions, and to protect all its subjects in the inalienable right to form their own religious creed, and to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. "Religion in America," says the writer just quoted, "takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must nevertheless be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country." The statement is true, and important as true. Religion, retiring from the field of political strife, quietly moulds the characters of individuals, and of families, and forms a public sentiment which induces wise legislation, and makes men sustain the laws of the land, not as a matter of policy, but of moral principle—as a matter of religious duty.

These United States are now effectively demonstrating these important truths. Europeans are amazed, as they pass through our country, to observe the almost universal regard for the laws of the land.

With no large standing armies, without armed men to keep the peace and enforce the observance of the law, we yet find little difficulty in the administration of justice. True, we sometimes have riotous demonstrations ; but for these we are indebted chiefly to foreigners whose characters have been formed under the influence of religious corruptions and civil tyrannies. There have been instances in which Americans themselves have trampled under foot the laws of the land ; but we may boldly assert, that in no country on the globe is the supremacy of law so fully established.

The most perfect freedom of discussion on all religious subjects, is found not only consistent with, but promotive of peace and good order. Professing Christians erect Churches, and meet for religious worship when and where they choose ; and instead of being arrested by the police for daring to offer prayer and praise to God without consent of the State, they are secure from disturbance under protection of our noble Constitution. Churches divide, and new sects arise, undisturbed by the civil authorities. Even infidels not only freely utter their sentiments, but have their public processions. And yet no one trembles for the safety of the State, or for the peace and good order of society. We cannot comprehend the alarm felt in European governments, when professing Christians meet for divine worship, unlicensed by the State. With us it is sufficient that truth is in the field, and has a fair fight with error. We prefer that error should blow off its steam at the risk of making a noise, rather than there should be a final explosion, doing much mischief. It is difficult to kill heresy *by force* ; it dies, when

exposed to *light*. Our nation stands before the world demonstrating and illustrating these most essential truths.

The safety and the wisdom of allowing the utmost freedom of discussion *in matters of State*, are equally demonstrated by our Government. With us the humblest citizen may freely express his opinions respecting the wisdom of all laws, and respecting the official conduct of every civil officer. And yet the laws are respected as they are in no other country; and our civil officers, safe without a guard from injury and from insult, discharge their official duties with little or no difficulty.

But in countries where a rigid censorship is exercised over the press, abuses are perpetuated, because no complaint can be uttered against them. Discontent spreads silently; whilst civil rulers, surrounded by unprincipled sycophants, dream not of the extent and depth of it. In the end, revolution furnishes the remedy, or plunges the country into deeper troubles. Our country is filled with news-papers and pamphlets, in which every public measure is freely discussed. By means of the press and oral discussion, public sentiment is formed; and at the polls it finds a free expression, and makes its power felt. With us it is next to impossible, that a bloody revolution can occur; for if the majority of the people are dissatisfied with the men in office, or with any of the laws, they know how to remove the former and to change the latter in a way both legal and peaceable. If the minority are dissatisfied, they know that *force* cannot help them. They must *reason* and *persuade*; and as with us *discussion* is the order of the day, the minority are likely to live.

and labor in the hope of effecting a change in public sentiment. De Tocqueville, struck with this aspect of our country, says — “In the United States every one is personally interested in enforcing the obedience of the whole community to the law; for as the minority may shortly rally the majority to its principles, it is interested in professing that respect for the decrees of the legislator, which it may soon have occasion to claim for its own. However irksome an enactment may be, the citizen of the United States complies with it, not only because it is the work of the majority, but because it originates in his own authority, and he regards it as a contract to which he himself is a party.” The stability of our civil government, and our internal peace show to the nations how safe and how wise it is for the State to leave the Church free to perform its peaceful mission, and to leave the minds of men untrammelled to form and express their opinions on all subjects, literary, scientific, civil and religious.

3. The United States has another great mission to accomplish, viz: to demonstrate, that Christianity is not only able to stand without leaning on the State, but that it exerts its most powerful and happy influence, when simply protected, and allowed to wield only the power of truth. Let us not forget, that the providence of God over civil governments has especial reference to the Church of Christ and the evangelization of the world. As the foundations of our government, more than those of any other nation in modern times, were laid in religious principles; so the great mission of our country undoubtedly is to promote the spread of evangelical truth. It seems to us strange, that the opinion should so generally

have prevailed in Europe, even amongst good men, that the Church, in order to the accomplishment of her work, needs the direct patronage of the State; or at least, that her efficiency is increased by such means. But men are slow in rejecting opinions, however untenable, which have passed current for centuries. It was a happy circumstance for the world, that in these United States the unhallowed union between Church and State was repudiated, when all the world besides imagined such union essential to the best interests of both. The unprecedented prosperity which this nation has enjoyed, and the pervading and happy influence of Christianity, afford evidence the most convincing, that interests so widely different in their nature, should never be united — evidence, that if the Church is to be a blessing to the State, she must be left untrammelled to do her appropriate work; and that if the State is to prove a blessing to the Church, it must be by protecting her in her rights, not by a corrupting patronage and a worldly legislation. The writer already quoted states, “that there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men, than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.”* All eyes have been turned toward these United States to see how the State would prosper, where religious and civil opinions were left free; and how the church

*De Tocqueville *Repub. U. S. A.*, p. 432-

would succeed, when merely protected, not patronized, by the State. Sufficient time has elapsed for the results to be known; and the knowledge of them is exerting an untold influence on all other nations. The State enjoys unprecedented prosperity; and the church is seen to be more efficient in propagating Christianity at home and abroad, and in sustaining a sound morality, than in an other part of Christendom. About the beginning of the present century, a remarkable prediction was made, in a prize Essay, read before the National Institute of France, by Charles Francis Dominic de Villers. Of our Republic he said — “ This State, still weak, at a distance from Europe, has not hitherto had much direct influence on the political system. But who can calculate that which it may one day acquire on the colonial and commercial system so important to Europe? Who can foretell all that may result in the two worlds, from the seductive example of the independence conquered by the Americans? what new position would the world assume, if this example was followed? and without doubt it will be in the end. Thus two Saxon monks will have changed the face of the globe. The Dominican Tetzels came impudently to preach indulgences at the gates of Wittemburg; the open and vehement Luther was indignant at it; he raised his voice against the indulgences, and all Europe was affected, put into a ferment, and inflamed. A new order of things was the result; powerful republics were founded. Their principles, still more powerful than their arms, were introduced into all nations. Hence arose great revolutions, and those which may yet arise are, doubtless, incalculable.”

We live just at the time when the great principles of the Reformation, embodied in our civil and ecclesiastical organizations, are making their power felt throughout the world. The people are demanding freedom of conscience and liberty of speech and of the press; and the churches are insisting, that civil rulers shall confine their legislation to its proper sphere, and allow them to go untrammelled on their high mission, accountable only to the Head of the Church. In other countries as well as in our own, it is beginning to be seen, how much more pure and efficient the Church is, when free from both the patronage and the legislation of the State.

And is there not yet another view to be taken of the mission of our country? In the midst of the wars and convulsions which must shake Europe to its centre, it is impossible that the work of evangelizing the nations shall not be retarded. If our country shall be blest with peace, the churches may go forward without interruption in sending the Gospel to the nations of the earth. Our Sabbath-schools, our churches and our literary institutions may raise up, by the blessing of God, many efficient missionaries. Our wealth may send them forth, and afford them the means for the efficient prosecution of their work. Our flag may protect them, as they go to and fro on their mission of love. Thus these United States may be God's chosen instrument to push forward the cause of Christ, whilst wars and revolutions retard and interrupt the labors of other portions of the Church.

But is it probable that our glorious country will accomplish her noble mission? or will she prove faithless to the most sacred and important trust

committed by the God of nations to any people in modern times? It cannot be denied, that wise men — men not given to fear — have, within the last few years, become alarmed; nor is it wise in us to imagine, that no serious causes of apprehension exist. As before remarked, dangers foreseen may be averted, which unforeseen may be ruinous. Unceasing vigilance is absolutely necessary to the preservation of our noble heritage, and to the accomplishment of our glorious mission. Let us take a careful survey of our position and of our perils, and try to read the “signs of the times,” as they foretell the future of our country.

OUR ADVANTAGES.

1st. Our geographical position is extremely favorable. We are so far removed from the old nations of Europe, that we are under no necessity of being involved in the wars and revolutions which are there inevitable. We desire none of their territory; and they could make no use of ours. We have no particular interest in the preservation of the balance of power between the different European nations. In the event of a universal war in Europe, however our pecuniary and commercial interests may be partially affected, we may enjoy profound peace. Nor have we anything to fear from the feeble Republics on our own continent. Their quarrels, wars and revolutions have not, for a moment, disturbed the quiet of our country. We should admire the wisdom of God, in that when he would build up a great nation to illustrate those great principles which are essential to the well-being of mankind; He placed it where its light could be seen without its being obscured by the

dust and smoke of the conflicts of other nations. Our country is called of God, not to propagate its principles by arms, but by example; and He has given it a position suited to its mission.

2nd. A second advantage, which can scarcely be overestimated, is — that under our Federal and State Constitutions, we enjoy the fullest liberty that any reasonable man can desire. The right to form and express our opinions on all subjects, the right to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, the right to acquire and enjoy property, — these rights are abundantly protected. The people govern themselves. We have, therefore, nothing to gain by a revolution, but much to lose. Consequently every man of principle, every man who loves his country, every intelligent man who understands his own interests, would throw his whole weight against any revolutionary movement. None but the most worthless and desperate class of men, or men who would fain establish Popery by law, would engage in an attempt to revolutionize the government. Therefore, until the mass of the American people shall lose all moral principle, all love of country and all intelligent appreciation of their own interests, we shall enjoy internal peace.

How different the condition of European nations. In almost every one of them there must be a revolution, peaceable or violent, before their subjects can secure their inalienable rights. There it is not the unprincipled and restless spirits only, who are deeply dissatisfied. The men of sterling principle, men who fear God, and will not accept a religious creed at the bidding of civil or ecclesiastical tyrants, are against the government, only because it is against

them. Instead of protecting them in the enjoyment of the rights God has given them, the civil authorities persecute them, because they dare to claim such rights. The prospects of a civil government cannot be very bright, when the best of its subjects are compelled to array themselves against it. The only way to conquer such men, is to exterminate them ; and the attempt to do this in the present age would be extremely hazardous. The safety of our country is found in the intelligence of the people. It is most desirable that every individual understand and appreciate his own rights. In Europe intelligence is dangerous ; for it informs men of their rights, and discovers to them the tyranny of their rulers.

Even in Great Britain, where a higher degree of freedom is enjoyed, than in any other part of Europe, important changes must occur — changes difficult to effect. The established churches of England and Scotland enjoy advantages, if indeed these prerogatives can be regarded as advantages, to which they are not entitled, and which, in the existing state of public sentiment, they cannot long hold. Whilst, then, other nations must be revolutionized, that individual liberty may be enjoyed, we have only to preserve that which we have ; and we need only intelligence and moral principle to enable us to do it.

3rd. Our national pride and the manifest necessity of union in order to protection, constitute a strong bond to sustain our civil Union. Our pride is not of antiquity. We have no long line of noble ancestors. Our history is of yesterday. Yet we can, with gratitude to God, boast of a nation founded in weakness, yet built on the great principles of human rights, not before recognized — a nation even in its

infancy invincible in war, and which, within a few years has become one of the mightiest nations on the globe; — a nation which stands before the world as the representative of the principles of civil and religious liberty. There is a charm in the name of Washington, which is felt by every American heart; and the history of the American Revolution will long be read with thrilling interest. The Declaration of Independence will long continue to ornament the mansions of the rich and the cottages of the poor. There are but few Americans, I am persuaded, who could be induced, for a moment, to entertain the thought of seeing this great nation broken into fragments, weakened and disgraced by civil war — a hissing and a by word to the tyrants of Europe.

But there is another feeling of great power, which associates itself with our national pride. It is the conviction, that our civil Union is essential to our protection. A citizen of the United States finds the name of his country a sure protection in every civilized nation; and the American flag protects our merchant ships in all seas. It is the interest of other nations not only to be at peace with us, but to maintain commercial intercourse. How sadly changed would be our position, were our country divided into two or three hostile governments. The proud name of *America* would no longer protect us in foreign lands. The stars and stripes would no longer float in triumph over our richly laden ships. Broken into hostile fragments at home, we should be poorly prepared to repel foreign invasions.

4th. The commercial interests of the country bind the different States together. The East, West and South are mutually dependent on each other. Our

navigable rivers, our railroads and our lines of telegraph have so interwoven the interests of merchants, mechanics and farmers, and indeed of all classes that there are none whose pecuniary interests would not immediately suffer by the dissolution of the Union, or by any disturbance of the pacific relations between the States. The love of wealth is a great evil; it is "the root of all evil." It is not wrong, however, that men should be "diligent in business;" nor that they avoid needlessly injuring their temporal prosperity. A regard, then, for the commercial interests of the country and of individuals,—strong enough in the hearts of all, exceedingly strong in those of the great majority—stands as a mighty influence against all attempts at revolution or radical change in our government.

5th. The ties of kindred form another strong bond of union between the States. Probably there is no country on the globe, where families become so widely separated, as in ours. In every State in the Union, you will find individuals and families from every other State. Families in the East have sons and daughters in the West and South; and those in the West and South have relations in the East. The spirit of bold enterprize pervades our population; and the young think little of engaging in business at the distance of thousands of miles from the homes of their childhood. Yet there is no country where family ties are regarded as more sacred, or where the love of kindred is stronger, than in ours. Consequently there are few families, whose feelings are not deeply interested in preserving our civil Union, and in maintaining the most peaceable relations between the different States. The author already

quoted states a fact which shows how the population of the older States is diffusing itself through the new. He says — “ We were assured, in 1830, that thirty-six of the members of Congress were born in the little State of Connecticut. The population of Connecticut, which constitutes only the forty-third part of that of the United States, thus furnishes one-eighth of the whole body of Representatives. The State of Connecticut, however, only sends five delegates to Congress ; and the thirty-one others sit for the new Western States.”* It would be difficult to overestimate the strength of the tie of kindred in binding together our civil Union.

6th. The comparative ease with which all classes obtain a competency, if not wealth, in our country, secures us against the danger arising from multitudes of poor, suffering families, who see no chance of improving their condition, but by revolution. The old nations of Europe abound with such ; and from them danger is constantly apprehended. But in these United States nothing more is necessary to insure a competency, than industry, economy, temperance and honesty. If employment cannot be found in the older States, there is abundance of the most productive land, extremely cheap, in the new States and Territories, where all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life may be easily obtained. Multitudes of our foreign population, soon after emigrating to our shores, become owners of real estate, and thus have their interests identified with the peace and prosperity of the country. Even the poorest of our population, if not vicious, are not

*De Tocqueville.

hopelessly poor. Not without reason, they cherish the expectation for their children, if not for themselves, of seeing better days ; and these cherished hopes are founded on the continued peace and prosperity of the country. I have said, these hopes are not without reason. As a matter of fact, not a few of the wealthiest men in the country, have risen from poverty and obscurity. Indeed occurrences of the kind are so frequent, as scarcely to cause remark. I very much doubt whether the large majority of the wealthier classes were not reared in poverty. Whilst, then, the wealthier classes have the strongest reasons for opposing all revolutionary proceedings, the well-grounded hopes of the poor equally tend to the same result. The rich and the poor rally in support of the Federal and State Constitution, and in sustaining the authority of law, convinced that thus they are consulting their true interests.

7th. The public sentiment in favor of education, and the general system of Common Schools, constitute another mighty influence in support of our government, and promotive of the prosperity of the country. In every State in the Union, there are found Colleges, Seminaries and elementary schools for the education of the rising generation, both males and females ; and the system of Common Schools, established in most of the States, and destined to become universal, brings the advantages of education within the reach of the poor, as well as of the rich. There are two aspects in which general education may be viewed, as tending to perpetuate our free institutions.

First, it qualifies "the sovereign people" to understand their rights, their obligations and their

interests. It is to the prejudices and passions of the ignorant that demagogues and designing men make their appeals. Intelligent men demand *reasons* for the course they are urged to pursue; and they can distinguish between reason and sophistry, argument and declamation. They understand their rights and how to protect them, and they can see how completely their obligations to their country are identified with their own prosperity. They discharge their duties cheerfully, because they thus promote their best interests.

Secondly, education qualifies men to weigh the evidences in favor of Divine revelation, and to understand the principles of the Gospel. Though it is true, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" it is likewise true, that infidelity and religious error are likely to prevail most, where there is least science and intelligence. It is a truth never to be forgotten, that "philosophy falsely so called" has been one of the chief causes of infidelity and of religious error. False science drove France and Germany into the most degrading forms of infidelity; and Phrenology and the Harmonial Philosophy, both false in their fundamental principles, are now propagating a low, materialistic infidelity in our country. It was a false philosophy which corrupted Christianity in the earlier ages of its progress; and that philosophy now pervades the creed of Rome. Christianity has everything to gain by the prevalence of science and of general intelligence. And since it is certain, that without the moral influence of the Gospel, our free institutions cannot possibly be perpetuated; the progress of science and of education, by favoring

Christianity, indirectly but powerfully sustain them.

One of the most favorable signs of the times, so far as our country is concerned, is the general and growing attention to *female education*. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise, than that female influence shall continue to be, as it ever has been, mighty for good or for evil. In no country and in no age has the standard of morals risen so high amongst men as amongst women. Moreover their purity, their intelligence and their affection give to "sweet home" much the larger part of its attractiveness. I have repeatedly quoted De Tocqueville. I have done so because he is eminently an impartial witness, and is familiar with the state of things in Europe. He traces many of the disturbances in Europe to the lack of peaceful homes; and of the influence of the women of America, he says— "As for myself, I do not hesitate to avow, that although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have no where seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked, now that I am drawing to the close of this work, in which I have spoken of so many important things done by the Americans, to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply—to the superiority of their women." The opinion this author so strongly expresses, is true. But in order that female influence may be what it should, females must be educated and intelligent, as well as pure and lovely. On them is devolved the difficult duty of laying the foundation of education in the minds of their children;

and if they are to exert a salutary influence over men, as husbands, brothers, sons, relatives and associates, their opinions must be worthy of respect. We rejoice, therefore, in the growing interest everywhere manifested in the education of females. Thirty or forty years ago, a much more limited course of study was deemed sufficient for them, than now. Even twenty years ago, the importance of establishing permanent female institutions of a high order, was very imperfectly appreciated. We now begin to realize, that the thorough education of females is as important both to Church and State, as that of males; and female seminaries of a high order are springing up throughout the new, as well as the older States. The Romish clergy, ever wise in adopting means for propagating their faith, have multiplied in our country schools for females. The day is past, however, when they can monopolize this most important department of education. Protestants of all denominations have entered upon the work in earnest.

8th. But after all, the great influence on which we rely for the perpetuity of our free institutions and the prosperity of our country, is that of Christianity. In more ways and to a greater extent than we can now mention, it is putting forth its salutary influences.

1st. It exerts a moulding and controlling influence over the minds of those who sincerely embrace it, and a pervading and powerful influence over multitudes who, without embracing it, admit and feel its truth and excellency. The number of real unbelievers in our country is comparatively small; and even infidels feel the powerful influence of a public sentiment formed by Christianity.

Mere intelligence cannot control the passions of men. Conscience must be enlightened; and they must feel the pressure of obligation. Their minds formed for immortality, and ever looking with anxiety into the future, must feel the power of motives drawn from eternity. The Gospel furnishes the only perfect moral code, the only elevating, purifying influence. In our country the number of true Christians is indeed too small. Yet there are millions of men and women of all classes, who fear God and try to keep his commandments. All of them, if we except a few who are blinded by some fanatical notions, throw their whole weight in favor of our Constitutions and laws; and their influence is felt by a far greater number who hope, ere they die, to become Christians. There are hundreds of thousands of Christian families, in which the children are trained to virtue and piety; and every one of these families has its circle of influence beyond the pale of the Church. There are many thousands of ministers of the Gospel whose lives are spent in exerting a pure moral and religious influence, and many thousands of churches whose organizations give them greater efficiency for good; and there are tens of thousands of Sabbath schools where children who would grow up to be a curse to the country, receive the moral training which makes them both virtuous and useful. There are hundreds of religious newspapers and periodicals which go into every part of the land to plead the cause of truth and righteousness. There are thousands of religious books, adapted to all classes, circulated through book-stores and by colporteurs, the extent of the influence of which it is impossible to estimate.

The triumphs of the cause of Temperance afford most indubitable evidence, that the influence of Christianity is becoming more pervading. Who ventured, when the Maine Liquor Law was first passed, to anticipate for the cause progress so rapid in other States. But one State after another has imitated the noble example, and the happy results have been made known, until there are few, if any, we presume, who doubt that within a very few years every State in the Union will put an end to the vile traffic which has so long cursed and disgraced the country. The time is at hand, when the votes of American citizens will no longer be bought with alcohol—when sober voters will elect sober men to fill the civil offices; and then the disgraceful scenes so often witnessed in our Legislatures and in Congress will cease to cause Americans to blush for their country. But what has given to the cause of Temperance its wonderful success? Christianity and nothing else. And the same influence will more and more protect the Christian Sabbath from desecration, and thus protect our youth against the temptation by which so many are ruined. Moreover; the same public sentiment which secures wise legislation against intemperance and Sabbath-breaking, will work other reformatations.

2nd. Christianity now binds together the hearts of millions of Christians in every part of these United States. Children of the same Father, redeemed by the same precious blood, sanctified by the same Holy Spirit, engaged in the same conflict with sin and error, animated by a common hope, they are not to be brought into hostility to each other by any ordinary cause. Though divided into different

denominations, and though sometimes unduely excited by minor differences, they yet cherish a deeply seated Christian affection for each other.

Happily, too, our ecclesiastical organizations are not bounded by geographical lines. True, the agitating question of slavery has sadly marred the unity of some Churches; but others have not allowed their fraternal feeling and their co-operation to be thus disturbed. With gratitude to the glorious Head of the Church, I mention the fact, that the Presbyterian Church, strong in both the free and slave-holding States, stands perfectly united, and expends her undivided energies in her appropriate work; and without doing injustice to other denominations, I may say — that no other Church constitutes so strong a bond of union between the different States.

The influence of Christianity is felt in moulding to virtue the character of individuals, in preserving the purity of families, in promoting education and science, in securing wise legislation, in sustaining our civil Constitution and laws; and, let us not forget, that it calls down the blessing of the God of nations. Tens of thousands of earnest prayers daily ascend to the throne of grace for the perpetuity of our own free institutions, and for the continued prosperity of our country. Let Christianity pervade the country; let Churches be erected in every city, town, village and neighborhood; let the Gospel mould the character of our population; and then the future of our United States will indeed be glorious. We are in little danger from foreign invasion, so long as we are United at home. The destruction of this nation, if it shall be destroyed, must be by *suicide*. But prevailing immorality can do

the work. There is no tie which it cannot break. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must save the country, as it only can save the souls of men.

OUR DANGERS.

We have looked at the bright side of the picture ; and most certainly we have strong grounds of hope for the future. Yet let us not conceal from ourselves the dangers to which we are exposed. They are the following :

1st. There is danger from the rapid increase of wealth. To prevent effeminacy, dissipation and crime, human nature requires the constant influence of strong motive to useful labor. Both mind and body require constant vigorous exercise to give them tone and power. The mind, ever active, demands excitement ; and if it be not found in useful employment, it will be sought in demoralizing indulgences. Wealth takes away motives to useful exertion, and affords facilities for sensual gratification. The history of families and of nations demonstrate its injurious effects. So far, however, as the interests of our country are concerned, we have two safeguards against the perils of increasing wealth. The one is the frequent occurrence of commercial crises ; and the other is the rapidity with which wealth changes hands. Once in every twelve or fifteen years, our country passes through a crisis, brought on by overtrading, in which large numbers of wealthy men are reduced to poverty ; and many others are stripped of the gains of years of toil. Although such crises are in themselves most undesirable, and many excellent men suffer in consequence ; yet on the whole

the results are undoubtedly favorable. But for such checks, the cupidity of men, stimulated by constant success, would know no bounds; and wickedness in all its forms would ruin the country.

But apart from the effects of such crises; wealth changes hands very frequently. It often requires more wisdom to keep riches than to gain them; and not unfrequently those whose success has been beyond their expectations, learn by sad experience that "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." But if they hold the "uncertain riches" till death, their children or their grand children will almost certainly scatter them to the winds. No family can stand the influence of wealth through three generations. In our country, the wheel of fortune is constantly turning. The rich are becoming poor, and the poor are rising to wealth. Whatever evils attend these changes, the consequences to the country are most salutary.

Would it not be wise in rich men to do good with their wealth, whilst they have it, instead of ruining their posterity with it? God holds them accountable for the use they make of it. He says — "The gold and the silver are mine;" and he bids them convert these perishing things into imperishable treasures.

2nd. A second danger to our country arises from foreign emigration. Every year brings to our shores hundreds of thousands, the large majority of whom are ignorant and immoral, and utterly unqualified to perform the duties of American citizens. Many of them, especially the Germans, are atheists, who know no liberty but licentiousness; and many more are pliant tools of Jesuits. But the American population are now awake to this danger; and that class of

foreigners who would trample under foot our laws, will soon discover their mistake. The claims of the Pope and his clergy to temporal power and their persecuting principles have been so boldly set forth, as to create a public sentiment, and produce a state of feeling, which they can neither change nor resist. How completely the tone of their papers and periodicals has changed within a few months! The haughty claimants of unlimited power have become harmless as doves; and they even feign surprise that we believed them in earnest, when they told us of the coming day, when religious liberty would be at an end in America! Their tactics will fail. The intelligent people of these United States will place no confidence in men who assert and deny the same propositions, just as they discover the current of popular feeling. Our naturalization laws will undoubtedly be changed. The foreign emigration will be checked. The children of foreigners will become Americanized. Indeed many who have emigrated to our country, are now amongst our most excellent citizens.

We conclude, then, that the danger from foreign emigration will not be very great. The influences which counteract any evil tendencies that exist in that direction, are likely to be sufficient. Popery — the principal foreign influence we have to dread, has been unmasked, and thus robbed of its power.

3d. A third danger is the influence of infidelity. I have said, the number of real infidels is not very great. Yet we have amongst us several forms of it. We have the German infidelity, which has infected the minds of some few Americans. We have the infidelity of the Harmonial

Philosophy and spirit-rappings. We have several phases of religious error, such for example as Universalism, which are nothing more or less than infidelity *masked*. And we have a considerable amount of scepticism which, whilst it doubts the inspiration of the Scriptures, has assumed no positive form. In all its phases, and especially in those phases most prevalent in our country at the present time, infidelity dissolves those moral principles which bind human society together, and leads to the grossest immorality and crime.

But there is little reason to apprehend the general prevalence of infidelity in this country. Christianity numbers amongst its humble disciples multitudes of men of all degrees of intelligence and learning; and so generally does it command the belief of those who are not by profession Christians, that few are willing to avow their disbelief of it. Even infidels are wont to profess great admiration of the character and of the moral code of Jesus Christ. In almost all our literary institutions, Christianity presides. The country is being filled with religious books for all classes; and the rising generation is generally imbued with the principles of the Gospel. And although the standard of piety is far too low, yet the fruits of Christianity proclaim its truth and excellency. In a word, TRUTH is in the field, and has a fair fight; and bad as human nature is, the Gospel has nothing to fear in this conflict. Infidelity has never been known to triumph in any country, where the knowledge of the Gospel was generally diffused, unless the churches had become very corrupt, and true piety almost extinct.

4th. Another danger to our country arises from

the agitation of the question of slavery. This subject has repeatedly produced such a degree of excitement, as to lead wise and good men to fear, if not to believe, that the division of our civil Union is inevitable; and the recent proceedings of Congress relative to the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas, have given to the excitement an intensity it had not before reached. But great as the danger has appeared to be, a calm survey of the true aspect of things in relation to slavery, seems to me to give much more reason to hope than to despair.

1st. In the first place, the masses of the people go with neither of the extreme views of this subject. So far as slavery is concerned, the American people are divided into four classes. First comes the class of fanatical Abolitionists, who regard slave-holding as the "sum of all villainies," and who, in their insane attacks upon the system, resort to bitter denunciation, instead of persuasive argument, and who encourage slaves to leave the service of their masters. This class of men never venture, unless it be stealthily, into the slave-holding States. They are content to stand at a distance, and agitate. They would not hesitate for a moment to destroy this glorious Republic. Fanaticism, from its very nature, is deaf to the voice of truth, reason and common sense.

On the opposite extreme, we have the real pro-slavery men, who in their zeal to defend themselves against the denunciations of Abolitionists, have convinced their own minds, that slavery is a great blessing; and instead of seeking its removal from the country, they would re-open the African slave-trade, and multiply the number of slaves.

Between these two classes stands a third, found chiefly in the free States, who adopt neither of the extreme views just stated, but regard slave-holding not only as a great evil to masters, to slaves and to the country, but as so far wrong that they could not conscientiously hold slaves. Yet they would neither divide the Church nor the civil Union in the effort to abolish it. They look and hope for its ultimate removal from the country, but consider it as the work of time, under the moulding influence of the Gospel. This class of men have been opposed most generally to the extension of the area of slavery.

There is still another class, great numbers of whom are found in the slave-holding States, who do not believe, on the one hand, that slave-holding is in itself sinful; nor, on the other, that slavery is a blessing to the master, to the slave, or to the country. On the contrary, they regard it as an evil of immense magnitude, but an evil which, in consequence of its having become so interwoven with our social organization, and because of human depravity, can be removed only by a gradual process, as the influence of the Gospel becomes more generally diffused. They believe the whole subject is best disposed of by treating it as did the Apostles of Christ — preaching the pure Gospel to masters and servants, and by promoting Colonization in Africa. Indeed both the classes now mentioned are decidedly favorable to the Colonization cause, and to these two middle classes belong the immense majority of the people. And since they are decidedly and earnestly opposed to disunion, the danger is not inevitable.

2d. Both the Abolitionists and the pro-slavery

men run to extremes which destroy their influence over men of common sense, and thus defeat their plans. Of the Abolitionists, of New England, a portion have already fallen into a fanatical and blasphemous infidelity, from which all good men, and all who retain any respect for Christianity, shrink back with horror. Such are Loyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and others of the same school. Others who still appeal to the Bible, and profess to be Christians, advance opinions so manifestly unscriptural, and urge measures so extreme and so full of mischief, that sober-minded men, however opposed to slavery, are constrained to oppose them. It is in consequence of such extremes, that a reaction has been produced in New England against Abolitionism. Prominent men, such as Drs. Adams and Lord, have felt constrained to come out and refute the unscriptural doctrines, and expose the evil tendencies of Abolitionism; and the Colonization cause is again gaining favor.

The true character of Abolitionism is further manifest from its affinity for all the forms of fanaticism which have recently appeared in our country. It aims not simply to abolish slavery; it would overturn the very foundations of society. In every form of radicalism, such as Women's Rights, it finds a congenial atmosphere; and it will affiliate with any form of error, that will favor its *one idea*. These extremes develop its true character, and render it comparatively harmless.

The extremes of pro-slavery men are no less fatal to their aims. When they declaim about the blessing of slavery, nine-tenths of sober-minded men know, it is no blessing. When they would make

the African a being of an inferior race, incapable of self-government, and created to be a slave to a superior race, every man who believes the truth of the Bible, or is tolerably familiar with history rejects the infidel doctrine. And when they propose to re-open and legalize the slave-trade, every man whose conscience is not "scared as with a hot iron," detests the proposition.

3d. It is difficult to excite men to desperate deeds, in matters in which they are not personally interested — especially when by such a course nothing is gained to others, and much is lost to themselves. Whatever men in the free States may think of slavery, there are few who feel disposed to become martyrs, or even to peril their personal interests, for its abolition. But it requires only a moderate share of intelligence for any man to perceive, that the dissolution of the civil Union would be of no possible advantage either to Abolitionists or to pro-slavery men. The former would be more completely cut off from all influence in the slave-holding States; and the latter would find their property even less secure than now. So that a state of things most disastrous to our country, to the cause of Christ and to the world, would result, without the possibility of any advantage, so far as slavery is concerned to either party.

4th. Christian influence will bind these United States together, and sustain the Constitution and laws against this agitation. There are some Churches, as before stated, strong in both the free and the slave-holding States, which are united and harmonious. The most influential of these is the Presbyterian Church, whose united influence will firmly resist the

fanatical agitation of the question of slavery and the division of the Union.

In view, then, of the many and strong ties which bind our country together, may we not conclude, that it is destined to weather the storm of the slavery excitement?

5th. The great danger, after all, to our country, is that morality and religion will decay, thus at once letting loose the passions of men, and calling down the judgments of God. The signs, so far as this point is concerned, are of a mixed character. On the one hand, we constantly read and hear of acts of violence and blood, which often escape the penalty denounced by the laws of the land. Such things awaken the fear, that there is not sufficient virtue in the land to execute the laws. This conclusion, however, is probably not justified by the facts in the case. For years past, the filling of the civil offices of the country has been in the hands of political parties so nearly equal in strength, that each was strongly tempted to nominate the men who were *available*, rather than those *qualified*; and neither party could afford to offend the corrupt and unprincipled men identified with them. The result has been — that the best classes of men retired from such contests, and left our civil offices to be filled by most unworthy and incompetent men. No wonder, then, that the laws have not been executed, and that criminals have gone unpunished.

But there is in the country virtue and patriotism enough, when once it shall be called forth, to place in our civil offices men who are competent to fill them, and who will legislate wisely, and cause the laws to be executed. Already have the people begun to

rise in their might, and protect themselves. They are protecting the Sabbath from desecration — thus drying up other fountains of crime and misery.

Still there is enough of corruption in every part of the country to arouse Christians to put forth their full moral power, and to cry to God for his blessing. If our country is to be saved; if it is to go forth successfully on its glorious mission; I emphatically repeat the declaration, *the Gospel must save it*. Sound morals without the Bible, it is impossible to secure. There is no other moral code; no rule of moral obligation, no power of motive. The foundations of our country's greatness were laid in Bible truth; and when the Bible shall cease to command the confidence of the people and to mould their character, those foundations will give way, and the glorious superstructure become a heap of ruins.

LECTURE VII.

The Millennium.

IN the preceding lectures we have seen the evidences, that the world is rapidly approaching another great epoch in its history; that the anti-Christian powers, Romanism and Mahometanism, are approaching their final overthrow; that Infidelity, after having assumed all possible positions, is no likely to gain the ascendancy; that the Church is preparing to do the great work to which God is calling her; and that there are reasons to believe, that these United States have been raised up in the providence of God to accomplish a great work for human liberty and for the evangelization of the nations. I now invite attention to that period, yet future, commonly called *the Millennium*. It is a period to which the people of God have long looked forward, and for which they have long prayed. In our day, this subject possesses a more absorbing interest than ever before; for many now living hope to see the dawn, if not the full splendor of that glorious day. The following points will claim our attention for a short time:

1st. There is to be a period when wickedness shall cease from the earth, and righteousness and peace shall universally prevail. This period Isaiah foretold in the following beautiful language: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Again — "Arise, shine; for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee — And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see and flow together, and thy heart shall fear and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.—Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought. For the nation and Kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall

be utterly wasted.”* Again — “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” To the same import is the following prediction of Malachi: “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”†

Throughout the Scriptures, we meet with many similar prophecies. Wicked as the world is, God has determined to subdue it, and here to establish his Kingdom. In accordance with such predictions, our Savior taught his disciples to pray — “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;” and when he bids his people pray for a particular blessing, he designs to answer their prayer. To those who judge after the manner of men, the expectation of a period of universal righteousness may seem visionary; but the believer knows, that “with God all things are possible.” He created the world for this end, and Christ, having died for this end, is now “head over all things to the Church.” His glory shall yet fill the earth, as the waters cover the deep.

2nd. The word *Millennium* signifies a period of a thousand years, which will be the duration of the reign of righteousness and peace on the earth. Of this period John the Apostle thus writes: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the

* Isaiah 2: 2-4. and 60: 1-12.

† Mal. 1: 11.

key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season."* The binding of Satan for a thousand years, implies that all the forms of error by which men have been deceived, shall disappear. No false teachers, "ministers of Satan," shall go forth to delude sinful men, spreading "damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." But under the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel in its purity shall be universally received. And as Satan will not be allowed to deceive men during the thousand years, so will he not tempt them to sin. As they will receive the truth in the love of it, so will they obey it. The docility of the people and their disposition to obey the truth, are beautifully exhibited in the language of Isaiah, already quoted: "And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord: to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

But what will be the character of the Millennium? This is a question which, as the period approaches, must awaken a growing interest. Two general views have been, and are now maintained.

1st. Some hold, that Christ will come in person at the beginning of the Millennium, and with his

* Rev. 20: 1-3.

Saints will reign on earth a thousand years. At his advent, not before, all anti-christian powers will be destroyed; the Jews will return to their own land, which they are to possess forever; and "the holy dead" will rise, and will be associated with Christ in the government of the nations of the earth.

2nd. Others believe that the Millennium will be a period of a thousand years, when, through the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel will be universally received in its purity and universally obeyed. Consequently righteousness, peace and joy shall fill the earth. The personal advent of Christ, according to this view, will be some time after the close of the Millennial period.

So far as my feelings are concerned, I think I would rejoice to know that the second advent of Christ is nigh at hand. Were I satisfied that the Scriptures do so teach, I would heartily say— "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." I am, however, obliged to adopt the second view just stated. I do not look for the personal advent of Christ before the close of the Millennium. Some of the reasons which influence my own judgment I shall briefly offer; though I cannot now go into a particular examination of the prophecies which are quoted in favor of the pre-millennial advent. There are two reasons why this question, as it seems to me, must be regarded as of practical importance.

1st. It must seriously affect the benevolent enterprize of the Church for evangelizing the nations. All men work *by faith*. No sane man is likely to form extensive plans, which he is fully persuaded will never be accomplished. If, then, it were the general belief, that in or about the year 1866, Christ will

come to destroy all anti-Christian powers, and triumphantly to set up his Kingdom on the earth; there would be an end to all efforts to establish missions amongst the heathen. For the work of preparation would scarcely be done, until a new dispensation would be ushered in, rendering all such labors of little avail.

2nd. The expectation of the speedy advent of Christ has produced, and is likely still to produce fanaticism in its worst forms, and afterwards to result in infidelity. We all remember the excitement produced, a few years ago, by the Millerite delusion. The year, the month, the day was fixed for the coming of Christ. Men and women neglected their business and their families in their haste to be ready to meet their descending Lord. Days and nights were spent in religious exercises. Some became deranged; some went to the Shakers; and some still utter their vaticinations of the speedy advent of the Savior; whilst not a few have been led into infidelity by the entire failure of predictions so confidently uttered. Another effect flowed from this delusion, viz: the immediate advent of Christ being the one absorbing idea in the minds of the people, they readily fraternized with all who agreed with them on this one point, however fundamentally they differed about the plan of salvation. These great truths were compromised for the sake of a groundless notion. What has been, is likely to be again. Human nature, ever disposed to run after the marvellous, will not be kept within bounds in the immediate anticipation of the personal advent of Christ.

But let not mere objections prevent us from examining

the question, how far the signs of the times favor the idea of the pre-millennial advent of Christ. I propose to offer a few considerations which influence my own judgment.

1st. There is a strong tendency in human nature to look for a visible, tangible, material glory. This was one of the fatal errors of the Jews, which induced them to reject and crucify Jesus Christ. They were in expectation of a great worldly Kingdom for the special advantage of themselves; and even the disciples of Christ, though under his instructions, were slow to give up a notion so agreeable to human nature. After his resurrection, "when they were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom unto Israel?" It cannot be denied, that in the idea of being appointed by Christ to rule over the nations of the earth for a thousand years, there is something extremely agreeable to imperfect men. With all that is heavenly in the view, there is quite enough of the earthly to please those whose sanctification is imperfect. There is certainly danger, lest imperfect beings, after the example of the Jews, give a too literal interpretation to the language of prophecy, in favor of a theory replete with so much earthly glory. The danger of error is certainly on this side of the question, rather than in the direction of the more exclusively spiritual. It is wise to take warning from the errors of men in past ages and in the present.

2nd. The theory of the pre-millennial advent is decidedly inconsistent with some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel. I speak now of that view of the subject which seems more prevalent in this country. It is maintained, that after the personal

advent of Christ and the setting up of his Kingdom, the human race will continue to multiply forever, children being born without original sin, and all being immortal, though in the natural bodies. Mr. Lord says — “But our belief that the race is forever to continue here and multiply, is founded on explicit revelations, as in Dan., 7 : 13 ; that the dominion with which Christ is to be invested at his second coming, is to be a dominion over all people, nations and languages, and that is not to pass away, but to continue forever and ever ; which indicates as clearly as express assertion could, that the subjects of that dominion are forever to continue to be peoples, nations and languages, and therefore are to live in the natural body.” The same writer maintains that “the Israelites plainly must dwell there (in the land of Canaan) and multiply, from generation to generation, through the round of eternal ages.”* In the same article, he speaks of the time “when the cause of sin is fully removed, and the race placed back in a condition essentially the same as that in which they would have existed, had our great progenitor not transgressed.” Now, if the human race is to go on eternally multiplying, and is to be born free from original sin, the number justified by faith in the atonement of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, will be comparatively trifling. The overwhelming majority, having never sinned, cannot be *redeemed* ; and, not being depraved, cannot be *sanctified*. They could not understand the command to “all men everywhere to repent.” The declaration — “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” —

*Theol. and Lit. Jour., July 1853.

could have no application to them. It would not be true to say, that Christ did bear *their sins* in his body on the tree, or that they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Indeed the Gospel could have no application to such a race. It does not meet the difficulty to say, that in future ages the human race will be prevented from sinning, or from being born in sin, by the mediation of Christ; for the atonement is represented in the Scriptures as the bearing of the sins of men, not as sufferings endured for the purpose of preventing them from being born in sin; and the Gospel is a glorious remedy for those actually lost, not a scheme to prevent their being lost. We would be very slow to admit any interpretation of the prophecies, which comes so directly in conflict with the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. Such interpretations must be erroneous.

3d. The doctrine of the pre-millennial advent stands connected not only with the eternal increase of the human race, and the eternal separation of Jews and Gentiles but with the restoration of the temple, and of types and carnal ordinances. Mr. Lord refers to several prophecies, "where," says he, "it is foreshown that in the last days there is to be a temple of God on Mount Zion, and that after the restoration of the Israelites, God is to 'take of them for priests and for Levites,' who are to 'offer burnt-offerings and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually;'" and he tells us, that according to the Millennarian belief, "persons of all nations will go thither to worship and in every part of the year, as a stream flows continuously." Christ himself is to be present at these animal sacrifices,

and to express his pleasure in them. In answer to an opponent, Mr. Lord thus explains his views on this point: "After saying that worshippers in offering victims will be able to give a visible and most emphatic expression of their thoughts and emotions in respect to the great facts and truths of their redemption, we asked 'What other rite could combine such a clear and impressive exhibition of all these great truths? What other acts could raise the offerer to such a vivid feeling of them, and enable him to express them with such energy? And what could raise these acts to such a grandeur of significance, and invest the facts and truths on which they proceed with such an effulgent reality, as the offering of the sacrifice, in the immediate presence of the Redeemer, and reception from him of visible tokens of its acceptance? To what a towering sense of his work must such a transaction, in which the Eternal Word himself takes a visible and conspicuous part, naturally raise them!'"*

Now, it does seem to me, that no opinion that could be advanced, is more improbable, or more manifestly at war with the Scriptures, than that the simple, spiritual worship of the New Dispensation is to be succeeded by a return to a visible temple, animal sacrifices and the ritual service of the Old. What would be the precise difference between this ritual service performed by Levites and Jewish priests, and "the weak and beggarly elements" to which some of the Gallatian Christians desired to be in bondage?† Under the Old Dispensation there was

*Theol. and Lit. Jour., July 1853.

†Gal. 4: 9.

meaning in animal sacrifices ; they were typical of the great sacrifice to be offered on Calvary, and pointed the offerer to it. They were “ a shadow of good things to come ; ” but now that we have the substance, what need have we of the shadow ? * And then these animal sacrifices are to continue, when sin has ceased from the earth. For what purpose ? When the Jewish penitent laid his hand on the head of the animal, and confessed his sins, there was significancy in the slaying of that animal ; for it taught impressively the fundamental truth, that “ without the shedding of blood is no remission. ” But what would be the meaning of such a transaction, when sin exists in the world no longer ? Or what could it mean, in view of the fact, that by one offering the great High Priest “ has perfected forever them that are sanctified ? ” But why have a temple which not one in ten thousand of God’s people could visit, and services in which no greater proportion could participate ?

Most certainly there is error in that method of interpreting prophecy, which contemplates the substitution of the more carnal, for the spiritual worship of God, and dreams of bringing the Church to the highest perfection by carrying it back to the childhood of ritual services. Multitudes of the Jews will, doubtless, return to the land of Canaan ; but that there is to be permanently a division between Jewish and Gentile Christians ; and especially that Jewish Levites and Priest are again to minister at the alter, offering animal sacrifices in the presence of the Son of God, — we certainly do not believe. The

*Col. 2: 14-17.

idea is directly in the face of the whole teaching of the New Testament. On the contrary, it is clearly revealed, that "in every place," not simply nor chiefly at Jerusalem, "incense shall be offered" to the name of God, "and a pure offering. For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."*

4th. We cannot help regarding it as a degrading and unscriptural view, to represent our Savior and his Saints as engaged in administering the temporal government of the nations for a thousand years, or perhaps forever. This is a work which requires no extraordinary wisdom, especially when righteousness shall universally prevail. Paul seemed not to regard such offices as greatly honoring to Christians. "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church. I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?"† Paul, methinks, would scarcely regard it as an honor, after preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and after a service of eighteen hundred years in heaven, to be King of the greatest nation on the earth. No — the glory which Christ has promised to his faithful disciples, is of an unspeakably higher character, than that connected with earthly Kingdoms. Every one of them shall wear "a crown of righteousness," and shall reign with Christ; but they will be employed in a higher service, than the administration of human governments.

*Mal. 1: 11.

†1 Cor. 9: 4, 5.

The principles of interpretation of prophecy, which lead to results such as these, must be greatly erroneous. It seems strange, that in this age of the world good men are falling into precisely the error in the interpretation of prophecy, which was so fatal to the Jews, at the time of Christ's advent.

5th. The Scriptures distinctly teach, that the Gospel Dispensation is to be the last, and that by the Gospel the Kingdom of Christ will be established amongst all nations. John the Apostle says — “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that anti-Christ shall come; even now are there many anti-Christ.”* Paul says — “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come,” &c. † Why should the New Dispensation, especially the latter part of it, be called *the last time and the last days*, if there is another dispensation to follow it? And then in the prophecy of Isaiah already quoted, the word of the Lord, the Gospel is represented as the efficient instrumentality in converting the nations. Moreover, the Gospel attended by the Holy Spirit is abundantly adequate to this work. The evidences of its inspiration are abundant, and are constantly gaining strength with each passing generation. It presents every motive which can influence the human mind. If Christ were personally on earth, there would be no real conversions but by Gospel truth, attended by the Holy Spirit. When our Savior gave the Apostles the great commission, extending to the end of the world, he put into the hands of the Church all the means necessary to the evangelization of the nations.

* 1 John, 2: 18.

† 2 Tim. 3: 1.

6th. The signs of the times do not seem to point to the second advent, as at hand. Certain it is, that the second coming of Christ is to judge the nations of the earth, to punish the wicked and reward the righteous. He himself used the following language, viz: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."* Of the same advent Paul prophesies, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." &c†

But the providence of God is rapidly opening the way for the preaching of the Gospel amongst all nations. For the last fifty years, the different branches of the Church have been doing a great work, which is mainly *a work of preparation*. In India, China, Turkey, Africa, the Islands of the South Sea—in all parts of the world, this work has been begun. Languages have been learned, the Bible and religious books translated, schools and churches planted; and the whole machinery of means is prepared for a rapid aggressive movement against the powers of darkness. Paganism is every where tottering to its fall. Romanism and Mahometanism are near their end.

* Math. 25: 31-32.

† 2 Thes. 1: 7-10.

Europe is threatened with a general revolution, in which multitudes must perish ; but the conflict is between truth and error, between liberty and oppression ; and the results will be in favor of truth and of human freedom.

In my first lecture, I showed — that when a great epoch is approaching, the providential indications foreshow the character of that epoch. But now, instead of evidence that the Gospel Dispensation has nearly finished its work, and is about to give place to another of a widely different character, we see providential openings for the spread of the Gospel in all directions, and the Church preparing more efficiently to do the great work committed to her hands. At the introduction of the Christian Dispensation, the Old Dispensation had become powerless. The Jewish Church, with individual exceptions, had become apostate ; and when Christ “ came to his own, his own received him not.” But there are no indications, that the Gospel Dispensation has lost power. On the contrary, the truth is now working mightily in all lands ; and the Church is becoming more efficient.

The conclusion to which we are obliged to come is — that the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent and personal reign of Christ on earth, is founded upon erroneous methods of interpreting the figurative language of prophecy, and has been favored by the disposition in men to look for a visible, material glory, rather than for that which is more spiritual. To go into a particular examination of the prophecies relied on to support the doctrine, does not fall in with the design of these lectures, and would require more time than I can devote to them. The

arguments now offered, however, seem to me to demonstrate, that the method of interpretation adopted by Millennialians is erroneous.

Respecting the Millennium the Scriptures justify the following conclusions, viz :

1st. It will be a period of universal righteousness on the earth. This is distinctly implied in the prediction of Isaiah, that "He (the Lord) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people ; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The authority of God shall be supreme among all nations ; their evil passions shall be subdued ; and useful avocations shall take the place of war. And as this result can be accomplished only by the prevalence of piety in families and individuals, the influence of the Gospel must be universally diffused. The same great truth is taught by the same prophet in his last chapter : "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Many other prophecies point to the same triumph of truth and righteousness.

Through the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the standard of piety will be elevated. The word of God will be understood ; and God's ministers will "see eye to eye." The different denominations of Christians, will be merged in one glorious Church, or will certainly "dwell together in unity." Children, freed from the temptations that now meet them at every turn, and more faithfully trained at home and in the Church, will be converted early.

Even now there is very far more attention paid to the religious training of the young generally, than at any previous period. Many of us can remember, when very few books adapted to the young could be found in our book-stores ; and we can remember, too, when the reception of young persons into the Church on profession of faith, was far less common than now. In the Millennial day, it will be a surprising thing to find an old man unconverted. “Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun ; and the light of the sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.” “Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”

2nd. The Millennial period will be one of remarkable longevity, prosperity and happiness. No wars will desolate the earth, and cover its surface with graves. No pestilence will be permitted to walk in darkness, nor destruction to waste at noon-day. The heavens will give the early and the latter rain ; and famine shall no more curse the earth. The terrible judgments of a just God against sin will cease, because wickedness will disappear from amongst men. Intemperance in eating and in drinking will no more brutalize and destroy them. Corroding care, wasting anxiety and distress will not bring on a premature old age. The grace of God will give peace within, and a kind providence will multiply temporal blessings. Every individual, we may hope, will be righteous and happy, and every family a Bethel. This

picture may seem too bright for this dark world ; but it is not so bright as that drawn by the pen of inspiration : “ For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create ; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled up his days ; for the child shall die an hundred years old ; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble ; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock ; and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord..’* ”

Will we live to see the opening of this glorious day? Alas! I fear not. We are in the beginning of the last great conflict between truth and error,

*Isaiah 65: 17-25.

light and darkness ; but the storm will be dark and terrible, and years must pass, ere the sky shall become clear. Let us briefly notice the events which will precede the Millennium, and the period of its commencement.

1st. The downfall of the anti-Christian powers, as we have seen, will take place at the end of Daniel's twenty-three hundred days, or of John's twelve hundred and sixty days. These two periods, which will terminate together, may end about the year 1866. About this time there will be fearful destruction of human life in the wars that will desolate the old world, if not the new. The glorious and terrible predictions of the 19th chapter of Revelations seem to refer to this period. The Church, the Lamb's wife, prepares herself to meet the Bridegroom, and the marriage is publicly solemnized. He goes forth on a white horse, clothed in garments sprinkled with blood, followed by the armies of heaven. His name is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He claims universal dominion, and an angel standing in the sun, calls all the fowls to come and eat the flesh of the multitudes of his enemies. The beast and the kings of the earth array themselves against him, and meet a final overthrow. Immediately after this, Satan is bound for a thousand years.

Things are now preparing in Europe for the great battle. Russia would fain get possession of Turkey; and in the effort to prevent this, England and France are likely to give the death blow to Mahometanism. Already has a spirit of enquiry showed itself among the Moslems, and they are beginning to look for the word of God. Whilst Napoleon is fully occupied with Russia, Protestant

principles are extending in France. The Pope, in constant danger of a general uprising in his dominions, and not secure of aid from any quarter, now that all the leading powers of Europe are engaged, or likely to be engaged, in the existing war, is unable to crush the spirit of enquiry now pervading his dark dominions. Sardinia presses him on one side, and Spain threatens confiscation of clerical estates on the other. The making of a new *doctrine* and the consequent deification of Mary, have not expelled either infidelity or Protestantism from Italy; nor has he thus kindled anew the zeal of his followers.

A remarkable fact it certainly is — that the war is destroying Mahometanism by the direct influence of France and England; and at the same time, it is affording time and opportunity for Bible truth to be extended through Popish countries. Should the struggle be protracted, as it now seems likely to be, a good work will be quietly done in those countries, whilst tyrannical rulers are fully occupied with affairs abroad. And when the next uprising of the people shall take place, and the storm of revolution shall have blown over, there will be a better foundation on which to reconstruct society.

But there are some remarkable prophecies which seem to point directly to Russia, as for example, in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel. If these prophecies relate to her, she will not be permitted now to gain possession of Turkey; but within a few years, when Mahometanism is nearly or quite dead, and when multitudes of the Jews shall have returned to their land, she will again invade that country with immense armies; and then the different parts of the

army, composed of different nations, will fight with each other, and the power of Russia will be effectually broken.

But God's ways are not our ways. We know something of the great results; but of the particular events by which they will be preceded and effected, we know little. Even after the downfall, of the tyrannical and anti-Christian powers, years must elapse, before the Gospel can universally prevail. In the 12th chapter of Daniel, we find this remarkable language: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Here, in connection with the time, times and a half, we have *three* remarkable periods, viz: 1260, 1290, and 1335 years. If we count, as eminent writers on prophecy do, from A. D. 606, the year when Mahometanism and Popery rose, these periods will severally end in the years 1866, 1896 and 1941. Of these periods I have seen no explanation so satisfactory as that of Scott: "The subversion of the Kingdom of the papal anti-Christ, and the destruction of the seat of the beast, and of the Mohamedan delusion, will probably be at the end of the 1260 years: Thirty years more may be taken up in wholly extirpating every anti-Christian power; and the last number of 1335 years, which reaches forty-five years beyond that time, may predict the complete introduction of the Millennium," &c. On the supposition of the personal advent of Christ at the end of the 1260 years, I know not what we are to understand by the two other periods.

According to the exposition now given, the Millennium will fully commence about the middle of the next century. Some indeed have supposed that the *seventh thousand* years of the history of our world, will be the great Sabbath—the true Millennium. This view is at least plausible.

CONCLUSIONS.

1st. This subject is well adapted to impress on our minds the truth, that the great curse of our world, the prolific cause of all our misery, is *sin*; and this other truth, that the Gospel is the great remedy. It would amaze one who has never particularly made the inquiry, to learn how large a portion of the unhappiness of the human family is traceable directly to sin against God. Begin with the ill-temper and fretfulness that mar the peace of the domestic circle. Take into account the absence of conjugal affection and faithfulness, the cruelty of husbands, arising from selfishness, from love of money, from intemperance, and the like. Think of the waywardness of children, their ingratitude and disobedience to parents, their mutual quarrels, their dissipation, their unhappy connections with others. Then consider the contentions between neighbors, growing out of covetousness, or the envy and jealousy arising between families. Go on through the whole of society, till you reach the destructive wars between great nations; and then take into account the judgments of God upon individuals, families, communities and nations, because of their wickedness. Who can tell all the sorrows and woes which even in this life sin inflicts upon men? No wonder that Paul represents the

whole creation as groaning and travailling in pain under its intolerable reign!* But Infinite Wisdom has provided a remedy. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. It exposes every sinful inclination, and urges mighty motives in favor of all that is pure and excellent; and we have the word of God who cannot lie, that its triumph over the powers of darkness will soon be complete. The fountains of corruption and misery that curse the earth, shall be dried up; and universal righteousness will bless the world. We may not live to see the glorious day; but we may rejoice in the assurance that it will come, and ours may be the distinguished honor of helping to usher it in. My unconverted friends, you may not live to see the Millennium; but you may be delivered from the curse of sin, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Cherish in your hearts no longer that cursed thing that has filled the world with misery, and now destroys your peace, and withers your brightest hopes. Behold the dreadful effects of sin, even where it is restrained by many better influences and in a state of probation, and think what will be its terrible fruits, when restraining influences shall be withdrawn, and grace shall give place to justice. "Strive to enter in at the straight gait." Look up and cry for deliverance.

2nd. The Church will be a beautiful object, during the Millennial period. Her divisions will be healed, and unity and peace restored to her. Then may her glorious Lord say — "My dove, my undefiled is but one." And with unity there will be purity.

*Romans VIII. 22.

As "holiness unto the Lord" shall be inscribed "on the bells of the horses," so will holiness be in the hearts and lives of the people. How beautiful the sight, when on each returning Sabbath, every family and individual will go up joyfully to the Lord's house to "behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." We can scarcely imagine what would be our feelings, if, as we walk through the crowded streets of our cities, we could recognize in every one we meet a brother, a child of the living God; and if, as we retire to rest, we could feel perfectly safe without a lock on our doors. Yet this will be realized for a thousand years. Then shall be completely fulfilled the language of Isaiah — "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

3d. With undoubting confidence we may pray — "Thy Kingdom come;" and we may labor with the assurance that we do not spend our strength for naught. The promise of God indeed is sufficient for the believer; yet it is encouraging, and calculated to overcome unbelief, to observe the gradual fulfilment of prophecy, and the manifest approach of the great events to which the Church has so long looked forward, as the forerunners of the Millennial day. The preceding conflict will be fearful, but it will not be doubtful. The Church may be called to pass through sore trials, but she will come out of them purified. We may not be here to witness the final triumph of the Gospel; but we shall know and rejoice in it. It is our privilege and our glory to fight manfully in this glorious war, that we may reign with our triumphant Lord.

4th. The signs of the times indicate the increasing

danger of those who are not engaged in the cause of Christ. There have been times of ignorance at which God winked; but those times are past. In rapid succession he will "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." It is in view of the final triumph of Christ, that the Psalmist utters the solemn warning: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

LECTURE VIII.

The End of the World.

For a period of one thousand years, there will be the reign of righteousness, peace, prosperity and happiness on the earth. Preparatory to this happy period will be the overthrow of Popery, of Mahometanism, of Infidelity, and of all anti-Christian powers. The downfall of the two first mentioned may be about the year 1866. Thirty years more may be required for the reconstruction of society on better principles; and forty-five more for the complete evangelization of all nations. Then shall the earth enjoy one glorious Sabbath.

But the Millennium must come to a close. Let us inquire what the Scriptures teach concerning that period which shall succeed it, till the end of time. The subject, though not properly belonging to "the signs of the times," seems an appropriate complement of this course of lectures. The following points will claim our attention:

1. The Millennium will be succeeded by the prevalence of wickedness on the earth for a short period. There will doubtless be a gradual decline in

the piety of the Church. The young consequently will grow up unconverted. Impiety, error and infidelity will gradually gain the ascendancy, until in the height of human wickedness an attempt will be made to exterminate Christianity from the earth. So we are taught by the following language in the Revelations of John: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Gog and Magog are mentioned in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy, as the enemies who will attempt the destruction of the Jews, after their return to Canaan, and in the attempt will meet a complete overthrow. The same names seem to be here applied to those wicked powers who, in the same spirit, shall make the last attack upon the Church of God, before the end of the world.

This general defection, after a thousand years of righteousness, will give an overwhelming demonstration of the total depravity of human nature, and will prove, that the Millennium was the blessed result of the mighty workings of Divine grace, not of any improvement in human nature. Could anything give so impressive an exhibition of the depravity, the folly, the blindness of men, as their return to infidelity and wickedness, at the close of so long a period of so long a period of peace and happiness under the reign of Christianity? Indeed the prophecy just quoted authorizes the conclusions, that the majority of those wicked rebels against Christianity, will be great in proportion to the overwhelming

evidence before their minds, of its great excellency and of its blessed fruits.

2nd. The second coming of Christ will be just at the time when the hosts of the wicked feel confident of exterminating Christianity from the earth. For how long a period after the Millennium wickedness will prevail, the prophecies do not decide ; only that it will be " a little season " But just as the armies of the ungodly shall have made preparation for a destructive onset upon the saints, fire from Heaven shall suddenly consume them. " And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Immediately after the overthrow of the wicked, John saw, in his visions, " a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them." Then the dead, small and great, stood before the glorious Judge.

Here it is proper to state, that immediately after death the righteous enter into rest, and the wicked are punished. " To-day," said Jesus to the penitent thief, " shalt thou be with me in Paradise." " Lord Jesus," prayed dying Stephen, " receive my spirit." Paul was in a straight in deciding, whether he would prefer to live and preach the Gospel longer, or to die — " having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." And again he said

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather than to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” Such Scripture declarations do not allow us to doubt, that immediately after death, the righteous are with Christ in glory; nor can we question, that the wicked go to their own place. For the rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes in torment.

But for the vindication of God’s dealings with men, both the righteous and the wicked, there will be a general judgment. Then Christ, who expired on the cross amid the triumphs and reproaches of his enemies, will come in the clouds with power and great glory. “Because,” says Paul, “he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” There has been nothing more characteristic of wicked men, than their fault-finding, murmuring, blaspheming and rebelling against the Divine administration. Some have denied the being of God. Others have denied his perfections and his providence. His Gospel has been rejected, perverted, vilified. On the Day of Judgment God “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts.” He “will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.” Every soul will be “weighed in the balances;” and all will be constrained to feel and to acknowledge the justice of the severest sentence uttered by the Judge against the wicked. And then, as never before, the grace of God in the salvation of his people will be seen and magnified. Then

will Christ "be glorified in his saints and admired in them that believe." The proceedings of that great Day will make upon angels and upon men an impression lasting as eternity. "And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself."

The second Advent and the scenes of the Day of Judgment, will be ineffably grand, glorious and awful. Christ will appear in the clouds of heaven, accompanied by all the angelic host, and in the midst of flaming fire. "The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." Those holy beings proclaimed in joyful strains his incarnation, ministered to him in his agony in the garden, witnessed his crucifixion, and announced to the astonished women his resurrection. They have been "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And now, when the great drama is to be wound up and the wonderful results to be brought to view, they will be present to give honor to the Son of God, and to rejoice in his glory.

But as He shall come in the clouds, the trump of God shall call the dead to life and to judgment. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." What a scene will now appear! The earth which will be one vast grave-yard, and the sea, will give up the unnumbered multitudes of the dead. The righteous will come forth to the resurrection of life, and the wicked to shame and everlasting contempt. And as the multitudes that no man can

number, rise from the dust of the earth, they shall see Jesus "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire." To the righteous how joyful the sight of their descending Lord; to the wicked how terrific the sight of their righteous Judge. As to the righteous, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Their redemption will now be complete. Their souls all spotlessly pure, and their bodies "fashioned like unto his glorious body.

" Arrayed in glorious grace,
 Shall these vile bodies shine,
 And every shape and every face
 Look heavenly and divine.

But to the wicked the Day of Judgment will indeed be "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." To them the language of John has a fearful application — "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." All their depravity, and their sins of omission and commission, secret and open, must now be revealed to angels and men; and the long-sighted Jesus will sit to judge them according to the deeds done in the body.

What a scene there will be! Behold "the great white throne and him that sitteth on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens flee away;" the countless multitude of holy angels around the throne; the whole race of Adam, divided into two vast companies,

the righteous and the wicked, standing before the throne, waiting the final sentence which fixes their eternal destiny. How marked the difference in the appearance of these two companies — the faces of the one expressive of perfect purity, and radiant with hope and joy; those of the other covered with shame, despair and woe. “Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” The sentence will be uttered; and “these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Thus will be completed the most wonderful work ever known in the history of the Universe — the work of redemption.

Then this earth will be destroyed by fire. “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” The discoveries of science seem to confirm, rather than weaken the revelations of the Bible respecting the final disposition of our planet. On the 8th of November, 1572, Tycho Brache and Cornelius Gemma saw a star in the constellation of Cassiopeia, which became all at once so brilliant, that it surpassed the splendor of the brightest planets, and might be seen even at noonday. This brilliancy gradually diminished, until the 15th of March, 1573, when without changing its place it seemed to become extinct. Its color during this period, exhibited all the phenomena

of a prodigious flame — being first of a dazzling white, then of a reddish yellow, and finally of an ashy paleness. It was seen for a period of sixteen months, and has never since appeared. The strange phenomenon produced great alarm amongst the astronomers of that age, several of whom wrote dissertations concerning it. It is asserted as an extraordinary fact, that within the last century, not less than thirteen stars in the different constellations, seem to have totally perished, and ten new ones to have been created; that in many instances it is unquestionable that the stars themselves, the supposed habitations of other kinds or orders of intelligent beings, together with the different planets by which they were probably surrounded, have utterly vanished, and the spots which they occupied in the heavens have become blanks. “What has befallen other systems,” says Beerritt, “will assuredly befall our own: it is foretold by Revelation; it is inscribed in the heavens; it is felt through the earth.”

But it has been a question, whether the world, after the mighty conflagration spoken of by Peter, will not be formed anew in beauty and glory, and become the heaven of Christ's redeemed Church. The question Rev. Andrew Fuller answers affirmatively. He says — “The earth will not be annihilated by fire any more than it was by water. It will be purified from sin and all its effects. The generations of a corrupt race of creatures having terminated, it will become the perfect and perpetual abode of righteousness. This view, he thinks, is decidedly favored by Rev. 21: 1-3. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And

I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

If, however, it be uncertain where the eternal home of the saints will be, there is no doubt about its being a most glorious home. The New Jerusalem is represented as "having the glory of God;" and its light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Its walls are of the most precious stones; its gates are pearls; and its streets of pure gold as it were transparent glass. It needs not a temple; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. It is not lighted by sun and moon; for the glory of God lightens it, and the lamb is the light thereof. Along those golden pavements, amid that glorious light, the nations of them who are saved, shall walk, and there shall they give expression to their overflowing joy in strains of heavenly music, drinking of the water of the river of life, and eating the fruits of the tree of life. How glorious beyond comparison is the eternal home of the righteous. Nothing on earth can give us even a faint idea of it.

Then terminates the mediatorial reign of Christ. The work of redemption completed, the Day of Judgment past, and the blood-washed company

having entered into rest, there will be no more mediation between God and sinners. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

This subject affords matter of solemn and profitable reflection.

1st. How trifling are the interests that now occupy the minds of men, compared with those future interests which demand their attention. The thought is awful, that each of us has entered upon an endless career. It is not a matter of choice with us, whether we shall be immortal. No angel, no devil, no finite power, can destroy that life with which God the Creator has endowed the soul. Willing or unwilling we must move onward to all eternity. What wonders each of us is destined to see in our endless journey! But will our career be from glory to glory, or from degradation to degradation? Shall we soar with angels up the heights of heaven, discovering new glories, and receiving new joys through eternal ages; or sink with blaspheming demons into the darkness and horrors of the bottomless pit? The manner in which we are now spending our days, is giving the true answer to these questions. On the infinite infatuation of men, who, lost in sin, and condemned to eternal death, turn from the cross and from the offer of eternal life, to lay up perishing treasures, and to enjoy, as for an hour, the poor pleasures of sin.

“ Yet man, fool man! here buries all his thoughts ;
 Inters celestial hopes without one sigh.
 Prisoner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,
 Here pinions all his wishes : wing'd by Heaven
 To fly at infinite, and reach it there,
 Where seraphs gather immortality
 On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.”

How will that worldly man be overwhelmed, when in the blazing light of eternity he shall see for what trifles he bartered away eternal glories. The word of God, the Holy Spirit, the inward monitor of the soul — all call earnestly upon the sinner to turn from sin and folly, make his peace with God, and lay up treasures in heaven.

2nd. The day of judgment, with all its fearful realities, *as to us*, is at the door. With this short life terminates our preparation for judgment. We know neither the day nor the hour, when our work will be done. We are almost in sight of heaven or of hell. We shall soon hear the songs around the throne, or the wailings in the pit. Preparation for heaven must be made speedily, or never. To be ready to render to God our final account and to enter heaven, is work enough for a long life. No one, however diligent, has ever felt that he had made any needless preparation. It is a great thing to be able like Paul, to say — “ I am ready !” My friends, how stands the matter with you ? Are you actively, diligently making the needful preparation ? If not, when do you propose to begin ? How much time do you propose to allow yourselves for this great work ?

3d. When we take into view our immortality, we see that the day of Judgment, though it appear distant, will come in the infancy of our being. What

is a period of a thousand years to one who shall live through millions of ages? It dwindles to a mere point; and we almost realize, that that great day is just at hand. The language of Peter, then, is applicable to us—"Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

4th. What changes the day of Judgment will make in the respective conditions of men, and what separations it will effect! The things that give prominence and influence to men here, will avail them nothing there. The treasures of the rich man will give him no advantage over the poorest. Nay—if he be found to have been unfaithful to God, who gave them to him, they will cover him with shame and confusion, and fill his soul with remorse. The titles of the man of honor will not raise him above the most obscure. Nay—if they were gotten by sinful means, or if the influence they gave was not consecrated to God, they will cover him with disgrace. The knowledge of the man of learning will give him no pre-eminence over the most unlettered. Nay—if it has not led him to Christ, and been consecrated to his service, it will be treated as unspeakable folly. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understand-

eth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth."

In that day, *sin* and *holiness* will divide the multitude on the left hand and on the right. What is his moral character, and what was his conduct in life, will be the great questions on which the destiny of each soul will depend. Rich men, then, will become poor, and poor men rich. Men of titles will be degraded, and obscure men will be raised to honor. The men of worldly wisdom will appear fools; and the men often ridiculed as weak and superstitious, will be pronounced wise. A holy heart and a faithful life will secure the unfading crown. Why, then, are not men more anxious to be "good and faithful servants," than to win a transient and worthless distinction! Why do they not labor more to be holy, than to be rich; to be owned of God, than praised by men? How utterly worthless are those distinctions which, at the hour of death, perish in a moment; which, in the time of greatest need, can be of not the slightest service. "What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

But that Day will effect separations between those who, in this world, were bound together by the strongest ties. If the ties of nature have not, connected with them, the more enduring ties of grace, the sundering of the former must be followed by eternal separations. The line, alas, will run through families, dividing husbands from wives, parents from children, neighbors and friends from each other. Let us try to realize these things now; for we are yet within the reach of mercy and of salvation. Hus-

bands and wives, parents and children, may stand side by side on the right hand of the Judge, and may walk together the streets of the New Jerusalem forever and ever.

5th. The great work we are called upon to do for our race, is to lead them to Christ, and influence them to lay up treasures in heaven. For this Jesus Christ became incarnate, labored for more than thirty years, and expired in agony on the cross. For this the Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. For this angels are ministering spirits. For this the world stands. The conversion of one sinner is a great event. It is the beginning of a life that shall never end—the commencement of joys that shall eternally increase—the starting of a pure moral influence that shall forever bless other happy beings. It is the uprising of an immortal being, who was sinking into the bottomless pit. No wonder there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. How deeply solemn the thought, that we Christians have a ministry in this great work. What a responsibility this ministry throws upon us. Our example, our activity, our faith, our prayers, stand most intimately associated with the eternal destiny of some of our perishing fellow-beings. Yes—and our most powerful influence for good or for evil, is felt by those we love best. “See that ye walk circumspectly.” Every evil temper we display, every neglect of duty, our coldness, our worldliness, our unbelief—all bear mightily upon those whose salvation we are bound specially to seek.

What an honor to be instrumental in turning one immortal being from the broad road to the narrow

way. And verily, God will give honor to those whose lives, energies and possessions are spent in this good work. For it is written—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Is it not amazing that Christians generally make so few personal efforts to "win souls?"

6th. The troubles of the righteous in this life bear no comparison with the glory which shall be theirs in heaven. Their heaviest afflictions are lightened by many comforts. Their most complete desolation deprives them not of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Their most protracted sufferings are momentary, when compared with their eternal joys. And, then, all these troubles by the way, are wisely designed to prepare us, through Divine grace, for the bliss of heaven; and the weariness of earth will impart sweetness to the rest of heaven. Nay—in the bright world to which the Christian is journeying, he will number his deepest afflictions amongst his richest blessings.

But how shall we rise to the conception of that fullness of joy which will be ours, when forever freed from sin; when in the presence of Christ, and to be with him through eternity; when companions of angels and of the saints of all ages; when we shall hear the song of the multitude that no man can number; when we look upon the glories of heaven; when we can look forward through eternal ages, and feel the undoubting assurance, that those ages will be full of bliss and glory? Well indeed might Paul say—"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

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