

THE
DECLINE OF POPERY
AND ITS CAUSES.

AN ADDRESS

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DECLINE OF POPERY, ETC.

VIEWED in whatever light, the setting up of the Church of Christ is the most important event in the world's history. It was the introduction of a new element into the affairs of men of vastly greater power than any previously known, and to whose influence there could be no bounds but those of the race and of eternity. At the point of time where the lines of history and prophecy met and blended, Jesus Christ came into the world. He showed his estimate of human conditions by the selection of one of poverty. His doctrines were the most pure, simple, and sublime. To show that he came not on any political errand, or to establish a temporal power, he declared that his kingdom was not of this world; and he warned his apostles not to confound the mission on which he sent them with the powers or prerogatives of earthly princes. Their mission was not to govern, but to teach; and their authority was not to interfere in the political contests of the nations, but to preach salvation to all men through faith in a crucified Christ, who came to seek and to save the lost. The end for which the Church of Christ was established was, by the diffusion of truth, accompanied by the agency of the Holy Spirit, to bind all men in love to one another, and to subdue all hearts into obedience to God. This was the sublime mission of the Church, and, to accomplish it, it was forbidden the exercise of any authority save that of its virtues and graces, and of any weapons save its pure and simple faith. It is a simple institution of God, with one simple end in view, and

adapted to all times, nations, and circumstances. As it came from the hand of its founder, it might be personified as a cherubic form descending from heaven amid the children of men, shedding around her a healing influence on all the moral diseases of society, hushing the spirit of discord, like a new sun dispelling the moral darkness of our world, drawing men closer to one another by drawing them all closer to Christ, and in the course of her progress converting earth into the likeness of heaven. And had the spirit of its founder remained in the Church, and had there been no great apostacy from its simple faith and worship, long ago the shout would have been raised from the earth to the heavens, and would have been echoed back again from the heavens to the earth, "Hallelujah, salvation, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

And how has the Church performed its mission? This is a pregnant question, and one which opens up its history for nearly two thousand years for discussion. As long as it retained the spirit of Christ, and followed the example of his apostles, and obeyed their instructions, its progress was gloriously onward. Its influence was soon felt to the extremes of the Roman empire; and long before the last of the apostles of Christ went up to his reward, it had its devoted converts even in the palace of the Cæsars. Through its martyr ages, when the Jew and the gentile, the philosopher and the peasant, the bond and the free, the refined Grecian and the barbarous Scythian, were in league against it, no opposition could retard its progress. The fires which consumed its martyrs only revealed new paths to more extended fields of conflict and victory, until its leaven of divine truth had reached the most distant nations, and its converts were found among all ranks and conditions of man.

But now a change passes over the scene, the result of its very successes. Almost from its very commencement the Church had to contend with heresies which chiefly involved the divinity of Christ. These were successfully resisted; and the controversy excited a vast enthusiasm

for the divinity of Christ, and a profound reverence for every thing in any way associated with him. And when Arianism, as a vanquished foe, was retiring from the conflict, the great Deceiver changed his hand, and converted the existing zeal and enthusiasm for the deity of Jesus Christ into powerful agents for perverting, depraving, and undermining the entire system of Christianity. And it is here we date, so far forth as it is a system of religious doctrines, the rise of popery, which, in all its ages and phases, has been the bane of the Church and the curse of the nations. But what is popery ?

The discussion which secures a right answer to this question naturally divides itself into the two heads of doctrine and polity. It is the combination of these that forms the system.

As a system of doctrine, it is clearly and fearfully developed. One extreme usually begets another ; and, reverting to the point of time already intimated, we find the zeal and enthusiasm excited for the divinity of Christ passing over into inordinate veneration for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; and, for its defense, the doctrine of transubstantiation was invented, that monster absurdity, and the pantomime of the mass was enacted. A great rage arose for any thing and every thing associated with his memory ; and relics were collected with incredible industry, such as pieces of the cross, and pictures of his person, and pieces of his garments, reverence for which soon grew into idolatrous worship, to excuse which the doctrine of relative worship was invented, or rather borrowed from the heathen. As superstition advanced in strength, it passed over from Christ to his friends and followers ; and hence the multiplication of saints and saints' days ; and soon reverence for the saints grew into adoration. And thus the apotheosis of heathenism was introduced. And to excuse this, the doctrine of saintly intercession was invented, on the plea that sinners themselves were unfitted to make any request of God. With these corrupt doctrines came in corrupt practices, such as forbidding to marry, forbidding of meats, and the com-

manding of corporeal austerities. And, to recommend all this, the doctrine was invented that these practices made satisfaction for sin, and were meritorious of heaven. And lest this might seem to derogate from the satisfaction of Christ, sins were divided into mortal and venial. As venial sins deserve not eternal death, and as men might die before performing the necessary penance to remove them, purgatory was invented, where penance for venial sins might be completed. And as punishment in purgatory is not eternal, and as souls sent there might be redeemed by the good works of others, the doctrine of works of supererogation was invented. The good deeds of men, over and above those necessary for their own salvation, were laid up in the treasury of the Church, and were sold out to such as were willing to purchase them. This was by far the most profitable doctrine of popery.

These tenets, artfully linked together into a great chain, forged for the purpose of binding the soul at the feet of the priest, were quietly received in those days of darkness; and the darkness was cherished by the locking up of the Scriptures from the people, and by the inculcation of an implicit faith. And in case that terrible book should be unlocked and brought out from under the double seal of a dead language and a bad translation, the fictions were invented of an unwritten tradition, without whose interpretations the Bible was imperfect; and an infallible judge, without which both tradition and scripture were unsafe guides. Thus did the devil, starting on the high wave of zeal and enthusiasm for the glory of Christ, build up the doctrinal Babel of popery, the foundation of which is laid in hell, whose top reaches unto heaven, and whose dark shadow has stretched from shore to shore.

In the most favorable light in which it can be viewed as a doctrinal system, popery is the merest caricature of Christianity. Its ritual is addressed to the eye, and its whole worship is a ludicrous pantomime, in which the priests are the actors, and the altar the stage, and the ig-

norant attendants, not knowing what they worship, the spectators. Popery and Christianity are just as opposite as is the truth and its caricature.

That you may see this, take, for instance, the doctrine of Christ crucified for the sins of men, and as making atonement to the law and justice of God for all that believe on him. It is one that lies upon the face of the Scriptures. And see how popery caricatures it. The doctrine of the cross gives way to the image of the cross, which is perched on the summit of its churches, and is braided on the backs of its priests, and paraded before its bishops; and to the sign of the cross, which is regarded as possessing a talismanic influence against evil spirits; and to that most unmeaning of all mummeries, the mass, in which the tragedy of Calvary becomes an unmeaning and loathsome farce. The truth is gone, and naught but its caricature remains.

Take, again, the doctrine of the intercession of Christ as our mediator with the Father. There is nothing more plainly taught than that he is the only mediator between God and man. And yet his work is forgotten, and his mediation is thrown into the shade by the mediation of Mary, and Peter, and Paul; the holy martyrs, virgins, and widows; the holy monks and hermits; the holy doctors, bishops, and confessors, some of whom were men of God, and many of whom were men of Belial; some of whom were ornaments of the Church militant, and are now wearing their crowns in the Church triumphant; and many of whom were "wizards and jugglers, the Mesmers, and Fausts, and Merlins of the ages of moral and intellectual darkness." Of the true and only mediation of Jesus Christ, the millions of popery know as little as Chinamen. The truth is gone, and naught but the miserable caricature remains.

Take, again, the doctrine of regeneration. How plainly does the Bible teach that we must be born again! And this consists in the renewal of our moral nature by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the truth. And this, all this, is effected by the

papal baptizer. There stands the robed priest, and, as the subject for baptism approaches him, he blows thrice in his face to drive out Satan. He then puts blessed salt into his mouth. Then the priest puts his spittle on his ears and nose. Then he is anointed; then he is baptized. Then holy chrism and a white cloth are put upon his head; and then a lighted candle is placed in his hand. And then he is regenerated! And this is the only regeneration known to the system of popery! And its heaviest anathemas are poured out upon those who would deny that this miserable exorcism, misnamed baptism, fails to confer the grace which it signifies!

These we give as specimens of the doctrinal system. And they are the best that we could adduce, and the most favorable to the system. It has not left a doctrine or sacrament of the Church in its native simplicity. It has virtually annulled the Sabbath by its holy days—and the worship of God by the worship of saints—and the work of Christ by the works of merit—and the work of the Spirit by the manipulations of its priests—and the word of God by first corrupting it, and then withholding it from the people. There is not a truth in the system which is not clouded by some error, or which is not cast into the shade of some towering superstition, where it can only maintain a sickly existence. Such is the doctrinal element of popery.

And equally unscriptural is its polity, by which we mean its external organization. While the Savior teaches that his kingdom is not of this world, the object of popery in every age has been to make it so. As to the external organization of the Church, every thing in the New Testament is perfectly simple. Not a word is said about prelates, patriarchs, cardinals, or popes, or about the duty of implicit obedience to them. There is a government enjoined, but it is as free and as simple as one can well conceive, while popery is as despotic and pompous as one can well imagine. And as it has no foundation in the Scriptures, the question arises, Whence came it? This question is easily answered.

As the Church advanced in age, numbers, and wealth, it gradually lost the martyr spirit of its founders. After Constantine put on the purple, and for reasons of state embraced Christianity, its corruptions rapidly increased. The Church was brought into an alliance with the state, an alliance which has always worked mischief to both. Its government was modeled, after the imperial, into great prefectures, of which Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople were the chief, while a sort of feudality was established, descending from patriarchs to metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, and priests, some with greater, and some with less power and dominion. As each grasped for more than belonged to him, the world became convulsed with their feuds and their wars. In these feuds, Rome, as the ancient metropolis of the world, and as the city where the martyrs shed their blood like water, had greatly the advantage. Its bishop, by fraud and duplicity, obtained the pre-eminence over his brethren. The state courted the influence of the Church to assist in maintaining its authority, and the Church sought the influence of the state in extending its ghostly dominion. Each yielded to the request of the other. The Church rapidly extended, and the ambition of priests conceived the idea of governing it after the model of the state. Rome must be the center of ecclesiastical as of civil power. The state had its Cæsar, the Church must have its pope. Cæsar had his senate, the pope must have his cardinals. Cæsar had his governors of provinces, the pope must have his patriarchs and archbishops. The governors had their subordinates, and these again theirs, down to the lowest office in the state; the patriarchs and archbishops had their subordinates, and these again theirs, down to the very lowest office in the Church. As in the state all civil power emanated from Cæsar, and all disputes were finally referable to him, so in the Church the pope was the source of all authority, and the final judge in all disputes. Thus the Bishop of Rome became the Cæsar in the Church—metropolitans and patriarchs were transmuted into proconsuls—bishops into

magistrates—the nominally Christian Church into a kingdom of this world, and its ministers into an army of spiritual janizaries, depending for their authority and support upon the pope, and sworn to execute his infallible will. Thus “the wicked” was fully revealed. The Roman empire has long since passed away; ages ago its mangled limbs were strewn over earth and ocean; but in the ecclesiastical organization called popery, we have the living model of that form of government by which the Cæsars bound the nations to their thrones, and by which they were enabled to crush at the extremes of the world every effort to break the yoke of servitude. It is an ecclesiastical despotism, fashioned with great exactness after the civil despotism of the Cæsars. Because of the vitality of the religious element which it contains, it has long survived its model, but it is among the things that must go, and is going, the way of all the earth.

Such, then, is the system of doctrine, and such is the polity, which, when united, form the papacy, or the Church of Rome. In polity, it is a pure despotism; in doctrine, it is a bad caricature of Christianity; in worship, it is far more heathen than Christian. The growth and the blending of these two systems were the slow product of ages; but, when completed, the sun which had risen over Judea set at Rome, and the nations were at the mercy of its universal bishop.

But how came the pope a temporal prince? Partly by donations from sovereigns in whose favor they exerted their ghostly power; mostly by fraud, of which the Vatican and the Lateran have ever been the arsenal and the manufacture. Who has not heard of the Decretals of Isidore? This forged and false legend narrates that, in reward for his healing from leprosy and his regeneration by baptism by the Bishop of Rome, Constantine resigned to Sylvester and his successors in office the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the Western provinces. Emperors, kings, and people were incapable of detecting the fraud which subverted their rights and freedom, and the forgery was received in the East and West

with equal reverence, and is still enrolled among the decrees of the canon law. By this vile forgery the pope was made at once the successor of Peter and of Constantine, and, in addition to his spiritual power, was invested with the purple and the prerogatives of the Cæsars. This base forgery, proved to be so by papal writers, is the foundation of the temporal power of the pope. And while popes themselves smile at the credulity which sanctioned it, they yet permit a false and obsolete title to sanctify their reign. "By the same fortune which has attended the Decretals and the Sibylline oracles, the edifice has subsisted after the foundations have been removed."

At this juncture, the way to universal dominion was wide open to the pope. The deepest ignorance pervaded the masses of the people. Deluded by legends, and false miracles, and vile impostures, they were grossly superstitious. With few exceptions, the world was governed by weak and contending princes, who fell an easy prey to the wiles of cunning ecclesiastics. Western Europe was parceled out among archbishops and bishops, who, in palaces, equipage, and power, were the rivals of princes. These had their parishes, and parishes their priests, whose influence was every where felt among the people. Thus the power of the pope was every where felt, and became, for obvious reasons, the controlling power. The old Jewish custom of anointing kings was revived, and, validly to rule, they must be instituted by the pope. Hildebrand arose and gained the vacant chair of Saint Peter. The opposition hitherto made against papal usurpation yielded before his amazing energy and iron will. Powers hitherto only desired and sought he openly declared to be his by divine right. He asserted his power to be supreme in the Church and in the state. And thenceforward, according to the canons, as says Southey, "the pope was as far above all kings as the sun is greater than the moon." He was king of kings and lord of lords, though he subscribed himself the servant of servants. The immediate and sole rule of the world belonged

to him by natural, moral, and divine right, all authority depending upon him. As supreme king, he might impose taxes on all Christians, and it was declared, as a point necessary to salvation, that every human being should be subject to him. That he might depose kings was averred to be so certain a doctrine, that it could only be denied by a madman, or through the instigation of the devil. The head of the Church was vice-God, and men were commanded to bow at his name, as at the name of Christ. The proudest sovereigns waited on him like menials, led his horse by the bridle, and held his stirrup when he alighted; and there were ambassadors who prostrated themselves before him, saying, "O thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." And here we reach the very culminating point of popery, when kings were its vassals—when crowns were its playthings—when kingdoms were its gifts—when its enemies were all subdued—when its word was law in the state and in the Church, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the North Cape, and from the interior of Hungary to the western shores of Ireland.

And has this power, of such monstrous usurpation and pretension, had no decline? This question we can best answer by a brief comparison of the present with the former state of some of those nations over which its authority was once supreme. We begin with good old England.

We select the beginning of the thirteenth century, when John was king in England, and when Innocent III. was pope. The question of investiture was not yet fully settled, and the see of Canterbury becoming vacant, the king and the pope had each his candidate. The election devolved on a few weak monks, and Innocent ordered them, on the pains and penalties of excommunication, to elect his man. They remonstrated, but finally obeyed. And the pope, sensible of his flagrant usurpation, sought to soothe the inflamed spirit of the king by a present of four gold rings, whose value he desired to enhance by informing him of the mysteries concealed in

them. But the insulted monarch would not be so cajoled, and he opposed the election of Langton with great violence. The pope exhorted him not to oppose God and the Church, and threatened the interdict, his great instrument of policy and vengeance during the Middle Ages. John persisted, and the awful interdict was declared. And suddenly the nation was deprived of all the exterior exercises of religion—the altars were deprived of their ornaments—the crosses and statues of the saints were laid on the ground—the priests covered them, lest the polluted air should injure them—the bells ceased to ring, and were taken from the steeples and laid on the ground—no rites were administered, save baptism to infants and the wafer to the dying—grave-yards were closed, and the dead were thrown into ditches, or buried in the open field—the rites of marriage were performed only in grave-yards—meat was prohibited—the people were forbidden to shave, or to salute each other in the street. The execution of the interdict was so ordered as in the highest degree to strike the senses, and to operate with force on a superstitious people. Such was the awe with which this interdict filled the nation, that it seemed to the people as if the sun, moon, and stars had withdrawn a great portion of their light, and as if the very air was stagnating around them!

But King John braved the interdict, and retaliated upon the bishops and priests. And next came thundering from the Vatican the sentence of excommunication. Then, then, the monarch began to feel the misery of his state. No civil or military officer could serve under an excommunicated king, and he was left without support. But yet he struggled on. Next came the bull absolving his subjects from their obedience, and excommunicating all that should hold any commerce with him in public or private. Although this filled his cup of sorrow, yet he resolved to struggle on, but finally yielded on the threat of deposition, and passed a charter, in which he resigned England and Ireland to God, Saint Peter, and the pope.

Comparing England then with England now, when, for a comparatively harmless exercise of authority, the pope is burned in effigy, and is every where denounced as a contemptible and doting tyrant, and when its noble prime minister scoffingly scouts his impertinent interference, we ask, is there no decline in popery? The empire which John gave to Innocent has been rescued from his successors, and is the open and noblest antagonist of the Vatican in the earth. Although in her established Church there is an admixture of the popish with the Protestant element, yet England is profoundly and piously Protestant.

We now turn to France, beautiful, chivalric, and versatile, and select the period when Raymond was Earl of Toulouse. A dispute arose between him and the pope out of the persecutions instituted by Rome against the Albigenses. He was refractory, and was excommunicated. The legate of the pope succeeded in raising an army against him, through the fear of which, and the desertion of his own people, he was led to purchase absolution on the most humiliating conditions. He delivered up his castles, divested himself of his sovereignty, and suffered himself to be taken to the church of St. Gilles with bare back, and a rope about his neck, and submitted to be scourged around the altar!

And what must be our conclusion, comparing France then and now, as to the power of popery? Between that time and this, other thunders of excommunication have rolled over the Alps, and have fallen upon this kingdom. Within our own day one was fulminated against Napoleon, but its sounds died away in the air, and the Corsican sent his holiness to prison for his impertinence. And now, while nominally papal, it is really infidel, and Voltaire and Sue more than divide the empire with Pio Nono. And it is not love for the pope, nor veneration for popery, but a dread of Austrian encroachments, that has induced republican soldiers to unsheathe their swords for the protection of the tyrant of the Vatican. And again we ask, is there no decline in popery?

Shall we next advert to Germany, the cradle of so much that is glorious in the history of man? We select the period when Henry was emperor and Gregory VII. was pope. Henry refused to surrender the ancient right of investiture, and he was insolently ordered to Rome to answer for his crimes. He returned insult for insult; and, in a fit of vindictive phrensy, Hildebrand thundered his anathemas at the head of the prince, excommunicated him, deposed him from the throne of his ancestors, and dissolved the oath of allegiance of his subjects. He was, in consequence, deserted by his princes and people; and, advised by his friends, he went to Rome to sue for mercy. He crossed the Alps amid the rigors of winter, and reached Canusium, where the sanctimonious pontiff resided with Matilda, the most tender and loving of all the daughters of the Church. The emperor was admitted without his guards into an outer court of the castle, where he stood for three successive days in the open air, with bare feet, and head uncovered, and with only a wretched piece of woolen cloth thrown around him to cover his nakedness. He was admitted on the fourth day into the presence of his holiness, who, with great reluctance, gave him absolution.

Here we have, in picture, before us the supremacy which popery once wielded in Germany; but how is it now? Great events have occurred in Germany since. There Luther found and read the Bible. The art of printing was there discovered. The claims and doctrines of popery have there been discussed by great and earnest minds. There the battles of the Reformation were fought; and the Thirty Years' War whitened and fattened all its fields with the bones and blood of the slain. And from these wars Germany came forth free and independent. And at the present hour (save dotard Austria, whose recent Hungarian barbarity should cast it beyond the pale of civilized nations) Germany is Protestant. When Celestine had completed the ceremony of coronating the son of Barbarossa, in Saint Peter's, as Emperor of Germany, he raised his foot and kicked off the crown

which he had placed on his head, to show that he had the power of taking away as well as of conferring imperial dignity. Such an indignity in our day would induce even priest-ridden, benighted Austria to send down her butcher Haynau to hang up Pio Nono as a sacrifice to her vengeance. Nor would all Italy furnish a brewer to beard him for so doing. And again we ask, is there no decline in popery ?

Shall we next advert to Ireland, greenest isle of the ocean, where a double despotism, political and religious, pressing upon its people for centuries, has been unable to cool the ardor of their hearts, or to quench the brightness of their intellect ? It remained in the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of its religion, although often convulsed by internal discord, after its conversion to Christianity, until the reign of Henry II. of England. Adrian, an Englishman, was then pope ; and, to gain political ends, he gave Ireland over into the hands of Henry, and annexed it, by public decree, to England. This decree was subsequently ratified by Pope Alexander, on two conditions : first, that Henry should "convert the bestial men over to the faith ;" and second, that he should pay the tax of a penny for each hearth in the kingdom to the Holy See, and collect it from the people. This was the "Peter's Pence," so called from the fact that it was collected on the festival of Saint Peter. Here is the spring-head of all Ireland's woes. Henry, in obedience to the pope's decree, invaded Ireland as his bloody missionary ; bound her in papal chains, and laid her at the foot of the English throne ; and there she has lain until this day, bleeding and groaning in her misery, and all through the arrogance, and perfidy, and policy of the pope !

Her people fell soon an easy prey to the seductions of Rome. Ignorant and superstitious, they were led easily to adopt a faith which in its rites bore so near a resemblance to those of their ancient Druidism. When Henry VIII. sought to introduce his reformation into Ireland, he was vigorously opposed by the clergy and the people, who insisted that "the Holy Island" belonged only to the

pope ; and the Vatican thundered its anathemas against all who should obey their sovereign, or who should fail to defend the supremacy of the pope in things temporal as well as spiritual. And, subsequently, encouraged by Charles and his popish queen, and their superior priests, that awful massacre of the Protestants was perpetrated by the papists, the narrative of which, even at this remote period, can not be read without a chill of horror.

And what is the state even of Ireland now ? To be sure its masses are the adherents of popery ; and that the pope and his priests should permit those masses for nearly ten centuries to remain in “bestial” ignorance, the victims of the most gróss deceptions, forms an argument against the system which all can see and feel. But the mind of Ireland is Protestant. Its industry, its commercial enterprise, its literature, is Protestant. The people are refusing any longer to be driven as sheep before the priests. Protestantism, long neglectful of its mission to that people, has entered upon its work. Its benign influence has already reached even the wilds of Conemara. The pope is alarmed, and he has sent his rescript against the Queen’s College. The bishops are alarmed, and hence their recent synod at Thurles. Feeling that Ireland needs, at this crisis, a stronger guardian saint than is he under whose patronage it has reposed for ages, the sages of Thurles have absolutely deposed good old Saint Patrick, and have elected the Virgin Mary in his place. And again we ask, is there no decline in popery ?

But we will pass over the other nations of Europe, as to which statements similar to these could be made, briefly to consider the state of Italy itself. There, for twelve centuries, popery has been in power. There is the fabled chair of Saint Peter ; there is the center of unity ; there is the person and court of the pope ; there the people have been cloyed and stupefied for ages with priestly processions and splendid masses—with feasts and fasts—with holy days and carnivals ; there the Muses have been bribed to lend their aid to priestly devices ; and Sculpture and Painting have lavished their magic

power to give such life, and beauty, and brilliancy to the creations of superstition, as to ravish and carry captive the senses. And while the Italian neck has often felt the galling of the papal yoke, and the Italian people often manifested that it was difficult to bear it, yet, of all the countries upon the earth, there popery has been the most securely intrenched. It has had the moulding of the mind and the conscience of the people, and of every institution of the country, and without let or hinderance. Surely here, if any where, we should find the evidences of strong life, and the pulsations of a strong and living heart. But what are the facts in the case? Take away the priests and their dependents, and there is not a city in Europe where the pope and his minions are more sincerely contemned. But a few brief months ago, under the pretense of retiring for devotion, he withdrew from his friends, changed his garments for those of a servant, and after putting a lady into the carriage, ascended to the box of the coachman, and thus fled from Rome to Gaeta. And why? His papal subjects would have reformation in the state and in the Church. And did they invite back the father of the faithful? Far otherwise. Feeling like singing a *Te Deum* for their blessed deliverance, they organized a free government; and that government was only yielded, and the pope was only permitted to return, at the mouth of French cannon and at the point of the bayonet of a French soldiery. And Pius IX. and his cardinals are only protected from expulsion, and perhaps from death, by the jealousy of other nations, who, fearing the influence of a Roman republic on the surrounding kingdoms, and knowing that the balance of power in Europe would be greatly changed if any of the great powers should gain possession of the Peninsula, have wickedly resolved to compel the old Romans to submit to the government of the triple crown. If, at this hour, the Italian people could freely express themselves, we fearlessly assert that the majority of them would triumphantly declare themselves against popery. They have even done it as it is. And why not? What have

they ever received from it but degradation? When the traveler in search of the fields and scenes rendered classic by the muse of history finds a man and a mule yoked together in the same harness and driven by the same goad, then he knows for a certainty that he has entered the States of the Church! And what can popery or its priests expect but indignant rejection at the hands of a noble people that they have so deeply degraded?

If additional proof is needed of the decline of this spiritual power, we would point to the present state of papal countries. Spain and Portugal are claimed as papal countries, but to what extent are they so? There is an external submission to the claims of popery, but the masses of the people are nearer a savage than a civilized state, and are at least as much pagan as Christian. The same may be said of the states of South America, and of every state within the bounds of nominal Christendom from which the Protestant element has been excluded. The picture of one is the picture of all. There is no Bible among the people—no instruction on the Sabbath—no preaching of the Gospel—no schools for the lower classes—no keeping holy of the seventh day. The mumbling of masses—the parading of the host—the ringing of convent bells, and the flitting about of lazy and vicious monks and friars, multitudes of whom have fled, like Joab, to the altar from the pursuit of justice, and who, under a cowl and cassock, are two-fold more the children of sin than they were before—these, these are the only means of instruction, in the things of God, enjoyed by the people. And the upper third of the entire population think no more of going to the confessional or to a mass-house than you or I think of repeating the absurd “Litany of our Lady of Loretto,” so piously recommended to the faithful by our friend of Saint Patrick’s. And the piety of the priesthood in these countries is about on a par with that of the sanguinary pope, who, when he ordered some of his refractory bishops and subjects to the torture, walked, bare headed, reading his missal, within hearing of their dying groans. In no por-

tions of the earth is popery so low, so declining, so utterly destitute of vitality as in those countries where the people know no other form of religion. There it is as dry, fruitless, and withered as is a forest through which the winds of twenty winters, unseparated by a solitary spring or summer, have whistled; or, to change the figure, in those countries it is like unto a bladder once blown to its full extension, but now dry, beyond the power of holy oil or water to soften, and rent beyond the power of priests to patch up, and utterly incapable of a new inflation. Ignorance and superstition are its only supports, and it will as certainly fall before the advances of light and truth as did Dagon before the ark of God.

But is there no life at all in the system? There is. Where, then, is it to be found? Not within the ancient metropolis of the world, whose fallen columns, decaying arches, and tottering walls are but the types of popery throughout the earth—not in stupid Austria, nor in mocking France, nor in debauched Spain, nor in the feeble, conflicting, and semi-savage states of our southern hemisphere, but amid Protestant institutions, where an open Bible, a free press, freedom of discussion, an intelligent Christian ministry, and the general prevalence of knowledge, compel its priests to cultivate external decency, to preach to the people, and to defend it as best they can. Hence, while in purely papal countries the superstition has reached the years of its dotage, and is laboring under the multiplied infirmities that attend the close of a dissolute life, there is a reviving of its ancient spirit of adventure and bold imposture in Britain and the United States. The starving papal Irish are pouring into England, and, to keep them together, a cardinal and a new batch of bishops was deemed necessary. The papal nations of Europe are pouring in their surplus population on us in torrents, and, to prevent their uniting with our people as do the rivers with the ocean, bishops and archbishops are multiplied. But all will not do. True, a few dreamy Puseyites, who sigh after the return of a theocracy and of a visible unity, and who judge of religion

as many silly people do of men, by the clothes which they wear and their pretensions, have gone to Rome. Some of them, like Father Ignatius, should have gone to an asylum. And this is made the occasion of feeble and fallacious harangues on the decline of Protestantism. But all this is simply the whistling of timid boys when passing a grave-yard of a dark night. The object is to cheer up their drooping spirits, and to prevent, by raising false issues, the enlightening, elevating, converting, and assimilating influence of Protestantism on the masses of the faithful. Where one returns to Rome, there are one hundred that desert it.

Such being the evidence of the decline of popery in all the earth, we have but a few words to say as to its causes.

One of these causes is the circulation of the Bible. Some how or other it has become an article of the popular faith, that the will of God, as revealed in the Bible, is the foundation of all true religion. What the Bible teaches is true; what it does not teach is a doctrine of men, and obedience to it is will worship. And to teach contrary to the Bible is to rob God of his authority as legislator, and usually ends in robbing man of the privileges secured to him by the true religion. Hence the importance of the circulation of the Bible, that all may know whether they are taught the true religion, or whether they are imposed upon by old wives' fables.

How strange and strong the impressions made upon the mind of an intelligent papist by a careful reading of the Bible! As he turns from page to page, he is amazed that he should have been so duped as to receive as the religion of God the teachings of popery. With his Bible open in his hand, he goes to a priest with questions such as these: Your reverence, does the Church teach the celibacy of the clergy, and anathematize all who do not receive it as a true and wholesome doctrine? Certainly, is the reply. Tell me, then, what does this mean: "Peter's wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever?" And what do these passages mean: "A bishop must be the husband of one wife, having his children in subjection;"

“let the deacons be the husbands of one wife?” If Pope Peter had a wife, why should not Pio Nono? If bishops and deacons are commanded to have wives, why would it be wrong in your reverence to have one? And what can he say?

Again he asks, Does the Church teach the doctrine of confession of the people to the priest? Certainly, is the reply. Tell me, then, what does this passage mean: “Confess your faults one to another?” I have often confessed to you; come, kneel down, and confess to me. And what can he say?

And these we give as specimens of the way in which the reading of the Bible leads men every where to the rejection of all that is peculiar to popery, and leads them over to the broad and elevated platform of Protestantism. And do you wonder that popery is declining in all the earth when you remember that the Bible is now translated into upward of two hundred languages and dialects, and is circulated among all people? And do you wonder at the opposition of popish priests to the Bible? They know that it exposes their fraud; and while they smile at the circulation of the works of Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Tom Paine, they follow the Bible colporteur, and make a bonfire of the books which he scatters. An illustration of all this we find in the recent popular movement at Rome. When the pope fled the city, the Bible entered it, and was circulated by thousands; when the pope returned, the Bible had to flee, and those who put it into circulation were punished with a deeper severity than were those who manned the walls, and nobly faced the allied forces collected by the father of the faithful for the murder of his children. But all efforts to arrest its circulation are in vain; as well might they attempt to arrest the sun in the career of its glorious way. And as surely as light is the death of darkness, will the circulation of the Bible be the death of popery.

Another of these causes is the increasing intelligence of the race. Ignorance is the soil where the principles of popery obtain their most magnificent growth. This

may be seen by a glance at the moral map of the world. The more intense the ignorance, the more intense the popery; and intense popery will soon produce intense ignorance. For illustration, we point you to Spain, Portugal, Italy, Mexico, and to poor, unhappy Ireland. And before the increasing intelligence of the masses, popery retires as do the mists of the morning before the rising sun. We are willing to make great allowance for the influence of early training; but no man must ask us to believe that any intelligent mind can believe in the absurdities of popery. Hence, when relieved, in this country, from the external pressure of priestly intolerance, the better informed even of the Irish peasantry smile when told that the pope can not err; that his power is supreme in the Church; that the efficacy of a sacrament depends upon the intention of the administrator; that the priest can grant an absolute and judicial absolution from sin; that he can convert a little flour wafer into God, and then eat him; and that all but papists are excluded from heaven. They are aware that their Church teaches something upon these subjects that they do not fully understand, and which Protestants reject; but, the more correct your version of them, the more convinced are they that you are making fun of their religion; and when convinced that such, in truth, are the doctrines of their Church, they desert it. And it is in this way that thousands in this and other lands are now deserting it. When the primer, and the spelling-book, and the Bible have found their way into all the earth, the days of popery will be at an end. And hence the opposition of the Vatican to all schemes for educating the masses.

Another of these causes we find in the fooleries of popery. Let it not be for a moment believed that the ridiculous and absurd legends of the Middle Ages; forged by monks for the edification of the faithful, are repudiated by the papists of our day. They are reproduced and circulated in papal countries for the benefit of devout minds. Have we not in our own day legends as absurd as the miracles wrought at the tomb of Becket—as the fount-

ains opened by Augustin—as Saint Patrick's turning old Rius into a blooming youth, and setting ice on fire—as Saint Mocha restoring to life some stags after the flesh was picked from their bones, and sending them into the woods—as St. Goar hanging his cape on a sunbeam—as St. Fechin causing the sun to stand still—as the crows making an apology to St. Cuthbert for carrying away some of the thatch of his house, and bringing him some pork as a peace offering—as St. Berach causing willow-trees to bear apples—as St. Cuana passing over a lake on a flag-stone? Do any of these lying wonders surpass in absurdity the yearly liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples; or the holy robe of Treves; or the winking Madonna of Rimini? When men commence thinking, they can not and they will not stand these absurdities. Their indignation will be as high as the impositions to which they were subjected were base; and they will cast off with scorn their priestly deceivers, and they will tread beneath their feet the dogmas and the emblems of a superstition as gross as any that God has ever permitted to live. See the effect already of the holy robe of Treves! It has led, and is yet leading men by thousands to desert popery. And such, also, must be the effect of the hoax at Rimini. Burning indignation is very apt to succeed the discovery of gross deception. Hence we wonder not when, on the flight of the pope, the populace went into the Roman churches, and brought out their confessionals, and crosses, and crucifixes, and piled them up in the street for a bonfire. And papal priests throughout the earth should read in this event the foreshadowing of their doom. As long as they can keep the nations in intellectual childhood, they may amuse them with bawbles, and cause them to understand, speak, and act as children; but so certainly as they rise to manhood, they will put away childish things.

Another of these causes is the despotism of popery. The Earl of Shaftesbury was among the most philosophic and far-seeing statesmen of his day. He often gave utterance to the following pregnant sentence: "Popery and

slavery, like two sisters, go hand in hand. Sometimes the one goes first, and sometimes the other; but when popery enters, slavery will soon follow." And the truth of this is abundantly illustrated in the history of the nations. The people it makes slaves to the king, and the king a slave to the Church. It has sometimes taken sides with the people against their rulers, but then it was to subdue the rulers to its yoke; and when it has taken sides with rulers against the people, it was because the people commenced panting after the possession of their natural rights. But, whether it sided with princes or with people, it has ever had but one object in view, the putting of its yoke on the neck of both.

By the very nature of its constitution and claims, popery is adverse to free institutions, and, in proof, we appeal to the history of the world and to its history. Where on earth has it ever been ascendant, without throwing its folds around civil institutions, and crushing them, as the fabled serpents from the ocean crushed the sons of Laocoon? And who has ever resisted its encroachments without sharing the fate of the priest of Apollo? Question the nations of the earth as to this matter. Ask Portugal, the country of Dionysius, of John II., and of De Gama, what has made her what she is, and she will point to her swarming priests, to her mendicant orders, to their grasping avarice and minute exactions—to that all-pervading papal influence which crushes every thing on which it falls. Ask Spain what has extinguished her spirit of chivalry, degraded her mind, paralyzed her power, and reduced her from her once proud eminence to a state so low that there is none to do her reverence, and the Ebro will cry to the Guadalquivir, and the Straits of Gibraltar to the Bay of Biscay, popery. Ask bleeding Ireland what has converted its noble people into beggars, and sown its fertile fields with salt, and keeps her swarming millions in Egyptian darkness, and it will return the same answer, popery. Why are Mexico and South America, with the glorious example of our Republic before them, what they are? Every time the Genius of Liberty

seized his trumpet to call up the people to the assertion of their rights, popery has wrung it from his grasp. The malign influence of popery upon civil institutions is its direct and necessary influence. When it acts out its heart, it has but one way of acting, and that is in the direct line of despotism.

That this is so, is plain from events but of yesterday, and from others that are now transpiring. When the Romans asked a constitutional government from the pope, he refused it. When he fled, they established a republic. And the old tyrant invited the allied armies of France, Austria, and Spain to abolish the republic, to quell the spirit of freedom, and to restore him to his throne and his triple crown. And for conduct far less base than that of Pio Nono, the Congress of 1776 declared the King of England to be a "prince whose character was marked by every act which may define a tyrant." And while the papists of our own land were singing their hosannas to democracy, and were raising money to assist the Irish in their resistance to British rule, yet, from the archbishop down to the most ignorant thumber of beads before the pictures of the saints, they denounced the citizens of Rome for declaring themselves free, for dethroning the most arbitrary despot in Europe; and, as if ashamed to go to God, they overwhelmed the Virgin with entreaties that she would restore him to his despotic chair. And not only so, but, by reviving the "Peter pence," they sent from free America tens of thousands of dollars to put bullets into French and Austrian cannon for the purpose of battering down the newly-erected citadel of Roman liberty!

And when the sympathy of all free hearts was flowing toward Hungary in its recent but fruitless struggle for independence, and when the free earth rang with aspirations for the success of Kossuth and his noble compatriots, that free rising and its noble leader were denounced at Rome as bitterly as at Vienna, and by papists in New York, in language as atrocious as the most hopeless legitimist could utter. The freedom of Hungary would not

subserve the purposes of popery, and it must abide in its chains. Where this system can not rule, it will ruin. Power is its religion—despotism is its creed. And when you attempt to remonstrate with it, it will answer you as did the confessor of the Queen of Spain a nobleman who set himself in opposition to him. "Sir," said the haughty and blasphemous prelate to the old Castilian, "sir, you should fear and respect the man who every day has your God in his hand and your queen at his feet."

This characteristic of popery is rapidly rising to the view of all men; and as it rises into light, all free hearts are rejecting the system. On this ground alone, within a few years it has been rejected by the city of Rome—by multitudes in Italy and Germany—by millions in France. And just in the proportion that the spirit of freedom pervades the earth, will popery be rejected where it exists, and its extension be opposed where it exists not.

The last of the causes which we shall name is the rapidly increasing and extending influence of Protestantism. It is true that, since the Reformation, Protestantism has not done for the nations all that, under other circumstances, it would have done. It has not converted France. But why? Let the murders of St. Bartholomew's Day and the awful butcheries which succeeded the revocation of the Edict of Nantes answer. It has not converted Italy. But why? Let the history of the Reformation in Italy answer. It has not converted Spain. But why? Let the history of the Inquisition answer. It has not converted the masses of Ireland. But why? Let the awful Irish massacre of 1641, instigated by the priests, and the bitter prejudices they have kept alive since among the people, answer. Popery, in its treatment of Protestants, has become the synonym of inhumanity.

Nor has Protestantism done what it might. In some countries it has been encumbered with state connections—in others it has declined from the true faith—in others it has lost its first love—in all it has been too neglectful of its great mission, which is to Christianize and civilize the world. But a brighter day has risen upon it.

Yet Protestantism reckons as its followers nearly one half the number that popery claims as its adherents. And although numerically one half less, in all the great elements of character and progress it is vastly its superior. In wealth, in enterprise, in rational liberty, in literature, in commerce, in all the elements of political and moral power, Protestant are to papal nations as the sun and moon in the heavens are to the fixed stars. That you may see this, blot from the map of Europe all that it owes to Protestantism, and what is left for the people to desire? Blot from those nations all that they owe to popery, and it would be like Moses lifting up his wonder-working rod heavenward, and rolling back the darkness that enshrouded Egypt. If this does not picture our idea, stop for a month or a year all that Protestantism is doing to civilize, enlighten, and bless the earth, and the world is moved and astounded from its center to its circumference; even old Austria, the Sleepy Hollow of the world, would spring to her feet and ask, What is the matter? Stop for the same time all that popery is doing for the same ends, and it would be no more missed than is the light of the lost pleiad from the sky.

What means that wakening attention in all civilized states to the education and elevation of the people? What means that restless anxiety observable even in the most petrified of papal states to obtain natural rights, which causes hoary error to shake its head with holy horror? It shows the advancing influence of Protestantism.

What means that ubiquitous influence of the press, which discusses all questions, whether pertaining to Church or state, before the people, and which brings out the verdict of the people as freely upon prince, pope, or prelate, as upon the most obscure of the people? It shows the advancing influence of Protestantism.

What mean these railways, and telegraphs, and ocean steamers, that are converting seas into straits, and that are bringing Canton and London, Liverpool and New York, within speaking distance, and that are bringing

nations the most distant into acquaintance and brotherhood? They show the advancing influence of Protestantism.

What mean the vast enterprise, skill, and industry of Britain—her extended commerce—her empire, upon which the sun never sets—her laws, extended over millions of India—her protection of the right wherever her flag floats? What mean the opening of China—the granting of liberty of conscience by Turkey—the payment of a Protestant ministry from the treasury of France? They show the advancing influence of Protestantism.

What mean those white spots on the moral map of the world, scattered along the western coast of Africa, and all over British India and Burmah, and rapidly multiplying on the sea-coast of China, and almost as numerous on the Pacific as are its islands? They mark the advances of Protestantism.

What mean that expulsion of archbishops from Sardinia—that noble address of the Roman people to the pope, in which they tell him that his claim of sovereignty for the chair of St. Peter reminded them “of the fable where Jove gives a log to be king of the frogs”—the rapid reformation progressing in western Ireland—the yet growing influence of the Rongé movement in Germany—the collecting of large churches in some of our own cities of abjuring papists—the growing inquiry among papists in all lands as to religious things and truths? All and each show the advancing influence of Protestantism.

What mean the rising cities of these free states—those national grants of land for the education of the people—those rapidly-multiplying churches for the worship of God in every direction—those missionaries that track the Indian through the wilderness, and that follow the tide of emigration in every direction—the bringing under our influence in a few months the papal states of Texas, New Mexico, and California—the building of cities and churches by the waves of the Pacific, and where, until recently, nothing in the way of religion dare be lisped

save popish mummeries? They mark the advances of Protestantism.

And, now that the power to make thunder is gone, what mean those grumblings and mutterings of the Vatican, coming in the way of rescripts and pastoral letters against Irish colleges, and Bible and Tract societies, and the promiscuous education of papist and Protestant children? What mean, among us, the putting up of papal schools—the preaching of priests and bishops—the importation of mass-mongers with long coats and no brains—the forming of clubs to sustain lectures whose objects are to vilify the Gospel, and to prop up a declining superstition? They distinctly mark the advancing influence of Protestantism.

And what mean the suppression of Protestant worship in Rome—the expulsion of the Bible from its walls—the perfect exclusion of all Protestant influences from the papal states of both the Old and New World? If Protestantism is of feeble influence, and declining at that, why so anxious to head it off every where? If false in theory, and feeble in power, and poor in resources, and endlessly divided withal, it is nowhere to be feared. We call, then, upon pope, prelates, and priests, no longer to act as cowards in the presence of such a feeble foe. It can do but little, nor can it do that little long. Give it free access, then, to Rome. Tell Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, and Austria, and the South American states, to open their gates, to raise the port cullis, to admit this declining system to enter, and without let or hinderance to try its strength. Tell them as freely to admit Protestantism as Protestant states admit popery. Will they do it? If not, then we nail to the counter as a priestly falsehood all that they utter as to “the decline of Protestantism;” and the man who a few weeks ago made this the theme of a lecture, whose feebleness is only equalled by its falsehood, and who has since harangued in London on the liberality of Protestantism, is probably at this very hour counseling the cardinals, instead of

opening these nations, to put new locks on all their doors.

But this man has gone for his pallium. Do you wish to know what a pallium is? At first it was a woolen mantle sent by the Roman emperors to the higher ecclesiastics as a badge of dignity; now it is a woolen band, three or four fingers broad, worn outside the vestments. It is made by the nuns of the convent of St. Agnes, and from the wool of consecrated sheep. For this bawble, the bestowal of which by the pope is necessary to the right exercise of the functions of an archbishop, the receiver must pay his holiness a very large sum. Nor is it bestowed save on the giving of the most solemn pledges of canonical obedience to the Holy See. When our friend returns, wearing this fillet made from the wool of holy sheep, the faithful expect that Protestantism will pale in the presence of this silly gewgaw from the convent of St. Agnes! This is the ridiculous side of the affair. But it has a serious one. This thing of bishops going to Rome for vestments and investiture convulsed kingdoms in the Middle Ages. And why? Because of their swearing allegiance to Rome, and renouncing their own sovereigns. This is the view of the matter which now so intensely agitates England. Let a serious rupture between Britain and Rome now take place, and Wiseman will treat Victoria as Becket treated Henry II.; the cardinal would be the commander-in-chief of the pope in the British isles. Should a serious rupture occur between us and Rome, the man with the fillet made from the wool of holy sheep would be here the feudal baron and liege lord of the pope, to maintain the claims of the most contemptible despotism that earth knows, in the very heart of free America, and under the shadow of the flag which secures to him that liberty of conscience which popery in power nowhere reciprocates.

But we must close. Popery has rapidly and is rapidly declining. There was a time when, if it was not respected, it was feared. But it is not so now. The force of its fanaticism is spent and unfelt. While all other

institutions are rising with the progress of society, this continues petrified. It is like a vessel bound by a heavy anchor and a short iron cable to the bottom of the stream, while the tide of knowledge and freedom are rising around it. Its spiritual tariff—its restrictions on the commerce of thought—its taxes on the bread of life—its efforts to bring seats in heaven into the priestly market—its mimic immolations of the Son of God—its sacrifice of the people for the sake of the priest—its nameless exactions and endless tyrannies, are not much longer to be borne. The Lord will consume it with the breath of his mouth, and will destroy it with the brightness of his rising.

“ Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,
Like an unburied carcass tricked with flowers,
’Tis but a garnished nuisance.”

From every tower of Zion the watchmen should lift up their voices together, and cry to the people that they have nothing to fear. The world is not to be educated back again to the intelligence of the Dark Ages. While popery may be compared to a decrepid, nervous, and wrinkled old man, whose hearing is obtuse, and whose memory is short, and who, heedless and forgetful of the events passing around him, is always prattling about the past, Protestantism is strong, and active, and zealous, and enterprising, and attractive, and looking to the future. The mind of the world is with it. Reason is with it. The literature of the world is with it. The Bible is with it. God is with it. The entire current of civilization is with it. And all these are against popery. The combat may be protracted, but the victory is certain. Nor, in the conflict, will the cause of popery be much aided by the support, nor will the cause of Protestantism be any weakened by the assaults, of those whose chief aim and grand ambition is to wear a fillet made from the wool of holy sheep.