

trade and the Mormon delusion is to improve and elevate the race? By no means. Their general influence has been bad. In like manner, when we consider the influence of Christianity comprehensively, the conclusion seems irresistible that it has retarded civilization. Had it not appeared and acquired an ascendancy when it did, another superstition as bad, or worse, might have grown out of the decaying polytheism of pagan Rome; but the fact remains unchanged that Christianity has been one of the great evils which the human mind, in its development, has had to encounter, and from the bad consequences of which mankind is yet suffering.

The future, however, is full of promise. Christianity is in a condition now similar to that of the pagan superstition when the former was struggling for ascendancy. Like the paganism of Rome, Christianity is destined to become an obsolete faith—a worn-out superstition. And in this age of science and popular intelligence it is improbable that any system of religious belief will be constructed upon the ruin of the decaying faith not vastly superior to Christianity. Nor is it possible, whatever system decays, or whatever may be the future religious belief of the masses, that the civilization of the nineteenth century can be destroyed as was the civilization of the Roman Empire. Barbarians cannot again overrun the world, and it is some satisfaction to know that one of the inventions of modern times, the great art of printing, renders imperishable to future ages all that has descended to us from the rich harvest-fields of the past, and all that has been added thereto in later times.

THE END.

RELIGION.

How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
 How powerless the mightiest monarch's arm!
 Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown.
 How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
 The weight of his exterminating curse
 How light! and his affected charity,
 To suit the pressure of the changing times,
 What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
 Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
 Who peopled earth with demons, hell with men,
 And heaven with slaves!
 Thou taintest all thou look'st upon.

—SHELLEY, in *Queen Mab*.