

or the occurrence of an eclipse, was regarded with feelings of terror, and as an unwelcome harbinger of coming calamity. It was a deeply cherished belief in the minds of many, that the year 1000, A.D., was to be the end of the world. The anticipation of the rapidly approaching event caused an almost universal stagnation and inactivity, and filled men's minds with anxious expectations, and dismal forebodings. Many dispossessed themselves of their property, others retired from the active duties of life, all awaited the dawn of the expected day: a universal lull brooded over the world. But the year 1000 came and went without bringing the anticipated event; men's dark fears and dismal forebodings seemed unfounded. At the close of that year the dark cloud which seemed to overhang the sky of the future rolled away; light seemed to break forth upon the darkness; signs of activity began to appear, and the world awoke from its slumbering to renewed active life. But only very slowly did the life return; the world seemed, as yet, in its childhood; the swaddling bands were yet around it; it had not yet learned to *think*. The Church of Rome still held complete sway over men's minds; all liberty of thought was forbidden; all search after truth was condemned, the teachings of the Church were considered infallible, no man dare question their truth; the study of physical science was sternly discountenanced; the teachings of Aristotle were received by the Church and stamped with the seal of infallibility. All physical truth was contained in Aristotle; all spiritual truth in the Church. We can imagine a condition of things in which the course pursued by the Church would be salutary and productive of good. When the nations of Europe were in their infancy, and unable to think for themselves, they needed some person to think and act for them. That per-

son was supplied by the Church of Rome. Whatever light or knowledge was in Europe at this time, was possessed by her. She was the educator of the infant races of Europe, when these races were rude and barbarous, and unable to educate themselves. The Church acted as the guardian of the young age. A stern guardian she sometimes was, demanding unhesitating obedience, unquestioning submission, to her authority. The circumstances of the age might have demanded this: stern measures are sometimes necessary under certain circumstances. The parent is sometimes obliged to deal sternly with the child; the teacher, with the pupil; he must demand instant obedience, unquestioning submission, so long as the child's powers are immature, his reason and moral nature undeveloped. But as the pupil advances to maturity, as reason dawns and his mental and moral nature become developed, then the teacher may relax his discipline, rely more upon moral suasion than upon force, and grant more liberty as the pupil learns how to use it. Now this was precisely what the Church did not do; and here it went wrong. The grand error of the Church lay in not taking into account the growing intelligence of the age and in not adapting itself to the new condition of things upon which it was entering. And what was the result? The result was that she paved the way for her own downfall, men refused to be treated as children, the Church began to lose her hold of the nobler spirits of the age, liberty of thought was asserted and claimed as the inalienable birthright of man, men began to drift away from their old moorings, the authority of the Church was resisted and ultimately defied, and a number of streams of influence were set in operation which, widening and deepening as they flowed, at length converged and culminated in the relig-