

lower classes are clean, the higher cannot lift themselves above the power of contamination. When the small-pox is in a place, great is the alarm in every household, and great the preparations and prescriptions against the spread of the disease. But there is a spiritual as well as a physical contagion; and if we allow corruption to grow and spread in our cities and through the land—if we leave the infected alone, the drunkard alone, and the drinking places alone to do their work of death without law or limitation, and corrupt literature alone to do its work—how can we assure ourselves that our sons and daughters shall escape the contagion? If we would beat back a fever, it is not enough that we attend to personal cleanliness—the whole town must be cleansed and fumigated; and so, if we would have our country prosper, it will not do for us to say: What have I to do with the corruption of the town? When your child comes in from the street with a black oath on his tongue, he virtually says to you: "That's what you have got to do with the corruption of the town." When a pestilence, rising from degraded homes, meets you on the highway and knocks you down, it virtually says: "That's what you have got to do with the corruption of the town." And so when a rotten representative gets you into his power and makes a whole community smart for their negligence, he virtually says the same thing. Now, this growing sense of responsibility on the part of the strong to help the weak, this disposition to go forth and touch the leper with our sympathy to which I have adverted, is a very cheering feature connected with our country, and promises well for the future.

But the most cheering feature of all is the actual religious life of the country—the number of churches, ministers, sabbath schools, bibles read and bibles distributed through the country every year. I know that in this respect there is much that is fitted to depress. When we think of the prevalence of scientific scepticism, the letting go of cherished beliefs, the removal of old land marks, the growth of intemperance and uncleanness, and the idea with many that Christianity is losing ground—that it is an old story, a mere superstition—we naturally despond. But this scene takes place every three or four hundred years; and then there is a reaction, and religion sets in stronger than ever. You are standing on the shore beaten by the coming tide, but ever and anon the great swelling wave retires, and for the time you think the tide is ebbing; but the tide is not ebbing—and if you stand long enough, you will see the whole shelving sands covered with the flood. We can only see a small part of God's ways; but to Him with whom a thousand years is as one day, there is no failure, no reflux of the wave; and if we had a longer vision and a stronger faith, we should see the tide rolling in all the time, and at last the whole earth filled with glory. I am not shaken by such things as those to which I have adverted. They are signs of change; fulfilments of prophecy;