

superiority of the times in which we live, may be found in almost all forms, phases, aspects, and conditions of society. A deep under current of iniquity pervades every variety of rank in the entire circle of the social compact, notwithstanding our civil and ecclesiastical exteriors wear a pleasing and beautiful aspect, and seem decidedly weighty in the scale of moral dignity. There is, indeed, throughout christendom, an outward polish—an external refinement—a graceful appearance of sterling excellence; but the realities of the inner temple, valued impartially according to merit, although modified and changed for the better, are nevertheless far behind when contrasted with parading exteriors, dressed up for the eye of the common beholder.

The times are very peculiar. The world, at present, is a riddle. Was there ever a period, since Adam left paradise, wherein there was so much knowledge, and so much ignorance; so much folly, and so much wisdom; so much elegance, and so much ruffianly rudeness; so much that is dignified and noble, and yet so much that is trifling and vain? "To what shall we compare this generation?" "Boys in the market-place?" More silly and inconsistent still; for the Jews, to whom this figure is applied by the Saviour, were not favoured with half the light, and opportunities of knowledge, and means of wisdom, theoretical or practical, as we moderns.

It would be amusing, was the subject not so grave, to hear some friendly people speak of the inutility of doing anything in the matter of religious reform at this day, since we have arrived at a position so enviable as respects religious change, comparing things that are with things that were. To oppose this idea seems invidious and unfriendly; for these well disposed and charitably inclined folks are ready to assert, in common with all protestants, the great necessity for a reformation in the days of the darkness of Catholicism. If, indeed, the doctrine of protestants be the doctrine of the bible, and the name protestant be a sufficient safe-guard against all religious error, it must be confessed that those who cling to protestantism, with all its variations, as a complete antidote for every unhealthy opinion, doctrine, and custom, are nearer the truth than those who oppose them.

But it will be perceived by the intelligent, that if the fact of protesting against papal corruptions be a just guarantee for evangelical doctrine, it involves the conclusion that all protestants, from the irreverent Socinian to the frantic Mormon, are upon grounds equally salvable and scriptural; and this is a conclusion, which, although perfectly consistent with the above reasoning, no one is willing to subscribe.