

artisans the seventh, and the peasantry the eighth, which includes day labourers, tillers of the soil, fishermen and sailors—in a word, the mass of the people, all of whom are in reality mere serfs. All this is evidence of barbarism, or of an inferior grade of civilization. But beside the eight castes, there is, as with the Hindoos, a class of outcasts, that must dwell in the outskirts of the towns and villages, and who are considered so impure that they are forbidden to enter any decent house. From these are selected the jailors, from which we can imagine the condition of the jails, and the public executioners, whose services are in as much request as in any country under the sun.

But the Japanese, poor, despised and oppressed, are notwithstanding a lively, inquisitive, laborious, and, to some extent, even an ingenious people. It is a mistake, however, to assert that they are superior to, or even equal to the Chinese. On the contrary, they virtually admit their own inferiority, when we find them imitating the Chinese in language and laws; and while having a written character and a literature of their own, they servilely imitate those of China. In imitation of the Chinese, they will even eat swallows' nests and smoked sea-cucumbers. Their inferiority is further proclaimed by the comparative imperfection of all their arts, lacquerware alone excepted, in which they not only excel the Chinese, but Birmingham itself, and, of course, all the rest of the world. Their silks and porcelain are inferior to those of China, and, although large producers and consumers of tea, they have not acquired the skill to prepare it fit for distant consumption.

"TRAMPLING UPON THE CROSS," a Japanese custom, which is to be discontinued after the 4th of July next, is worthy of a passing notice. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese were the foremost maritime nation of Europe, and pushed their commerce and settlements in the East further and faster than any other. In 1512 a Portuguese vessel was wrecked on the coast of Japan. The crew were treated kindly. In 1519, Francis Xavier, with two companions and a shipwrecked Japanese whom he had converted, landed at Kagosima, on the island of Kinsiu. The Prince of that island permitted him to preach, and teach the people of his dominion. Xavier, as is well known, was the most zealous and talented of all the disciples of Loyola, the founder of the Society of the Jesuits, and Romish annals abound in marvellous tales of his labours, sufferings, and triumphs in the East. Some of the most wonderful of these are his exploits in Japan. Certain it is, he made many converts during his two years sojourn in that country. He left in 1551 and died the following year. He was soon followed by others of these indefatigable propagandists, so that in 1570 they claim to have had thirty churches, and to have baptized thirty thousand Japanese. But the transition from Buddhism to Jesuitism is but a slight one, and this rapid progress in bringing the people over is not at all incredible. A few years afterwards a single priest is said to have baptized seventy thousand in two years. In 1587 there were two hundred priests and 1,800,000 converts. Then commenced a fierce opposition, arising from political considerations. Certain Spaniards, boasting of the vast extent of the possessions of their country, were asked by a Japanese prince how their king became possessed of half the world, and being told that it was through the priests, who first converted the nations, the prince's fears were roused, and from that time a fierce persecution of the Christians commenced—at first cautiously, for the Romish party was strong and numerous; but soon their power was broken, and then the war was waged in earnest, and did not cease until every thing bearing the name of Christian was extirpated;

and to show their detestation of the usign by which the supposed traitors and enemies were best known, they established the custom, or annual ceremony, of "Trampling upon the cross." The Dutch merchants, who about this came in for a share of the trade of Japan, are accused of lending assistance to the natives against the Christians, and the fact that they alone, of all the nations of Christendom, were allowed to carry on trade or intercourse during the subsequent two hundred years, gives some colour to the charge. But this trade was only granted on humiliating conditions.

In religious matters it is plain that the Japanese are not intolerant, for they have three different religions, divided into upwards of thirty sects, the votaries all of which live peaceably together. The persecution above referred to was essentially a political not a religious one.

The government of Japan is a federal aristocracy, at the head of which are two emperors—a civil and an ecclesiastic—real power being in the first, exercised under the control of the feudal princes (a body as numerous as the days of the solar year), and the last being only an expensive mute. The feudal princes, while they control the sovereign, are themselves kept in some order by a *long compulsory residence* at the capital, and when at home, by the exercise over them of an organized and severe system of espionage.

Miscellaneous Articles.

NEVER!

Give up, do you say, young man? Never! when was earth more rich in noble enterprises? when had men such opportunities to immortalize themselves in the gratitude of their race? Why go despairing all the day long in apathetic indifference, when heaven points the way? Human rights—human happiness and human salvation link you to the great chain of being. Tell us of the crusades of boasted chivalry to drive the Saracens from the tomb of an absent Saviour, but what are these to that life—long struggle for the magna charta, of the living temples of the living God? The womb of the future is big with "coming events."

"And coming events cast their shadows before," but an emphatic *now* demands the earnest attention of rising manhood. Rest on our oars we cannot; we must leave our impression on the rippled sands of time *now or never*, for once past there is no return. Time's ledger book of influences is open. Credit and Debtor are emblazoned on opposite pages, but who finds his balance sheets equal? Give up your account cries the past. Beware thunders the dread future. But who fears? Is it not enough to hear? "My presence shall go with you." These are stern selfish times; for brotherly advice and wooing christian sympathy we get bitter sarcasm and frigid icebergs of formality, and for love there comes back to our bosoms the keenest hatred. What of that? Never give up. A hypocritical age needs no chicken-hearted men to stem the everflowing torrent of obloquy. To be an active reformer or progressivist is to be "a marked man." John Knox said of the Scottish Reformation. "It was a rugged work and would have broken to pieces many finely made men." Take hold of truth and heed not the cry of those who, clinging to their idols, declare you go too fast, or too far. Although this is a utilitarian age, men do too little—not for themselves truly—but for the world and for christianity. All admire the ardent man, who may even sometimes overstep the bounds of moderation and in the main is right, but none can love the laggard. The deeper the plough is in the ground, the

greater is the difficulty of guiding it. The bounding, rushing torrent is not over scrupulous about old water marks. The mind of man was never intended by its great Creator to be inactive. Obstacles there may be to the progress of a young christian, but these are only dykes which prevent the waters of immortality from flowing for a time—the inquiring mind like a sinous river swells and presses against the obstructing barrier between it and the wide ocean of eternal life. Like Longfellow's *Ideal Alpine Youth*, the motto on our flag of progress should be "Excelsior." Is the world to be redeemed? then "onward." Are you a minister of the truth? Then "onward." Teach—Preach—Dogmatize. (To be a dogmatist in the right—is right.) This is a universal call. Healer of soul or body—cunning workman or tiller of the soil—sage or novice—"onward," "for who knoweth whether ye are not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this." Alas! there are some who, thinking themselves wise, become fools; they travel onward, but like a wanderer in a dark morass, see only flitting and uncertain lights, which lure them on to perilous paths. There are others who scorning false gleams, seek for the true rays—men who lift their eyes from earth and overlooking the glow-worm behold "The bright and morning star," shining in the clear sky. Universal youth should be of such. The germ of future heavenly greatness is in the youth of our land. In this day of mad speculation and auriferous insanity should the scolling grow a upas tree and blast the soul, what then?

"God bends from out the deep and says,
I gave thee, the great gift of life:
Wast thou not called in many ways?
Are not my earth and heaven at strife?
I gave thee of my seed to sow,
Bringest thou me my hundred fold?
Can I look up with face aglow
And answer "Father here is gold?"

D. C.

Princeton, Dec. 14th 1858.

OF THE RULING ELDER.

It is a prevalent error, that the Bible is silent on the Subject of Church Government; that while its statements of doctrine and of duty are precise and definite, it does not prescribe any form of ecclesiastical polity, and consequently, that men may, with perfect harmlessness, choose the system that suits their taste, or that seems best adapted to the spirit of the times or the fashion of the age. It is true, no doubt, that the New Testament does not set forth any formal or systematized scheme of polity, neither does it contain any exact and systematic exhibition of the truths of Christianity; but as the latter *can be arranged* by collating the different portions of the Word, so the former can be constructed by analysing the principles involved in the organisation and workings of the Churches during the Apostolic age. In some of the previous tracts in this series, it has been maintained that the Lord Jesus is the sole King in Zion—the Head of the Church, which is His body, His family, His kingdom; that within that Church, and over it, He exercises special rule and supreme authority—appoints its ordinances, prescribes its laws, defines its duties, and sets over it its governors; now, that necessarily includes the idea of government—the existence of certain fixed principles, divine in their origin, perpetual in their authority, and as the positive institutions of Christ, binding on the consciences of men.

We must, therefore, disclaim the idea that the Divine will has not been made known on the forms, the ritual, the visible characteristics of the Church of God; and that it matters not what the government of a visible Church is,