

ers before the Reformation—earnest, godly men, who saw the Truth and proclaimed it, but, as “the time was not yet,” their voices were silenced by the strong hand of power. Still, they did a work and fulfilled their mission. They kindled a light which could never be wholly extinguished. Though not allowed to burn brightly in the open air, it quietly smouldered away in private—in the hearts of the humble—in the quiet homesteads in the distant glens and the mountain shellings, until the breath of the bolder chiefs of the Reformation fanned it into a glorious flame. The last of the Culdees had disappeared; still, the people of Scotland, and particularly about St. Andrews, could not have wholly forgotten their contest with the Romish Hierarchy. Indeed it has been thought, and we think justly, that such latent recollections had done much by way of preparing the Scottish mind for the truths of the Reformation.

The battle that gained our freedom was not fought in one day. No single company or regiment can claim the whole honour of the great achievement. On the contrary, under the guidance of the Head of the Church, company after company and regiment after regiment marched onwards, through danger and death, until the citadel was taken and the mighty vanquished. And when the work was over and the victory won, none was more ready than the General of each army to say “Amen” to the declaration, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Did we know nothing of that system against which the Reformers arose in all the might and majesty of Truth, except what can be gathered from the turgid eloquence of the modern platform, we would certainly be inclined to despise it. The popular lecturer may regard Popery as a mere card-castle which must surely topple down before a puff of air—the Reformers did not. Protestantism, like other grand questions, has suffered and still suffers as much from its so-called friends as from its enemies. It is said that the cause of Slave Emancipation has been much damaged by the intemperate zeal and vapid declamation of Northern Abolitionists. And certainly every intelligent lover of Protestantism and of Freedom knows that much said upon both is mere declamation—unsatisfactory to the intellect—unsuited for convincing the understanding, however well adapted for arousing the worst feelings and passions of the human heart. Anger not being argument, and bad names proving nothing beyond the weakness of those who use them, the Romanist may long remain unconvinced, and the Pope calmly dispense pardon in St. Peter's, while no stronger weapons are used in the attack. The Reformers understood the strength as well as the weakness of the Papacy. They knew and proclaimed it to be a

system of Error, yet of Error strangely mingled with Truth, and deriving its strength from the mixture. Were there no truth to be found within it, the overthrow would not have been so difficult. The creed of the Romanists erred through *excess* rather than *defect*. They held, and do still hold, many of the grand fundamental truths of our holy religion, but they hold them in common with so many untruths of human invention, that the power of the Truth is rendered negative. It is true the precious gem is *there*, but it is so covered over with rubbish that in effect it is lost to the multitude. The work of the Reformers was to remove the rubbish and expose the gem—to bring the pure Word of God in contact with the human conscience—to place in the hand of every man an open Bible, that he might there find the grounds of the sinner's justification before God.

The Reformers saw, in the system of Popery, one of the most potent and perfect organizations. The stronghold which they resolved to attack and overthrow, in the name and might of their Master, had been consolidated by the successive labours of centuries. The most cunning workmen had been employed upon it. Buttress after buttress had been added, and the foundations were laid broad and deep, and the walls rose high and massive. Around it were gathered the associations of ages. To its centre in Rome, kings and princes and nobles performed their pilgrimages, to bow at the shrine of St. Peter and kiss the toe of his successor. From the throne of the Vatican, as a centre, the whole of Western Christendom acknowledged the authority of the Pope, and bowed to his mandate,—if we except the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont and the Culdees of Iona, while they were still allowed to exist. The anathemas hurled from Rome shook the thrones of kings throughout the whole of Europe. It was pronounced sinful—not simply to *oppose*, but even to *question* or *doubt* the Papal authority. So complete, indeed, was this marvellous organization, that even those doubts and questionings could be reported at headquarters and measures taken accordingly. The secret thoughts of the heart, indulged in the midnight silence of the monastic cell or the bed-chambers of kings, could be reported at St. Peter's in Rome. At the Confessional, sins of *thought* must be confessed, as well as sins of word and action. The Confessor has instructions to report all such, if they be important, to his superior, and he, again, to the next above him in rank, and so upwards, through Priest, Bishop, Archbishop and Cardinal, until the secret is safely lodged with “the head of all the Churches.” Thus it is, that the thoughts of a true Catholic in the Island of Cape Breton or the Island of Ceylon—in Nova Scotia or in India—may be known and discussed at Rome, while his nearest neighbors, nay, even his own family, may know nothing of the matter. Yet this is but one instance of the sin-