

the region of philosophical thinking, Aristotle and Plato had it all their own way, and minds submitted unquestioningly to their dictates. Then when you come into the region of Christian history, there was a time when certain forces impeded the free action of the human mind. The Fathers were sometime listened to as infallible oracles; Councils spoke in such a way as to restrain in a measure human liberty. Then Papal thunder began to reverberate through the centuries, and men's minds were terrified and hushed into silence and inactivity. The Reformation in a good degree broke up that spirit of apathy, and continued enslavement. There came forces into play like that of the negative philosophy. There came conceptions of human individuality, and consequent human dignity; consequent human freedom; consequent earnest application of the mind at liberty to a degree in which it had never been before. I venture to say that that statement will be admitted as true by nearly all who listen to me; but it will be variously regarded. There will be some one who will be prepared to say with a melancholy shake of the head, "Oh, yes, that is true; there is great freedom, too much freedom." "I tell you no, dear brethren,—I tell you no, for an obedience to human authority, however high, degrades and lowers human intellect; but, on the other hand, to be free in relation to all human authority, but obedient to the divine, elevates the human spirit, enlarges it, and expands it, brings it into sympathy with him who is the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (Applause.) "Oh," but says some one, "this freed mind in this year of Christ is being productive of very mischievous results, discouraging rather than encouraging." It is a very reasonable and natural thing for some of you to suggest a difficulty of that kind; but with your permission I shall venture a few moments to deal with it. You know that scientific thought has been regarded as distinctively the thought of our age. I am very glad there is so much scientific thought. I am very glad there are so many sciences. The only complaint I feel inclined sometimes to utter is that they should give such hard names to these sciences. (Laughter.) They sometimes put one in mind of that Russian Prince, whose name, it was said, was to be pronounced this way:—you were to sneeze three times, and then say tschitschi. (Laughter.) I wish they would give these sciences simpler names, but I am glad of all of them. I know that in some instances they are not always wise in their earliest utterance. Do not we all know how young men sometimes sow their wild oats, and become sober and calm at a later period of their lives. The young sciences have their wild oats to sow, and they are sowing them in some degree, but they will become more sober, more wise, more prudent, more grave, more deliberate, and with the sciences that are young now, it will be as with sciences that are old and mature, they will come in time to bring their quota, one by one, of reverence and homage and corroboration to the truth of that blessed word. (Applause.) I have no fear about the sciences, I am glad for the men that are prosecuting them. All that I can wish for them is, that soon through experience, or better still, through the teaching that comes from above, they may fall upon the wisest and best course of prosecuting their work, and when they do, there is nothing about which to be apprehensive. The God of the universe is the God of the Bible, and His universe will never contradict His words. (Hear, hear, and applause.) "Well, but," you will say, "in point of fact, we are in rather a bad condition of things in some places just now, through this very freedom, and independence of man." Now, will you bear in mind, dear friends, two considerations? I would like to speak these slowly and articulately, so that everyone can understand them, and take them away; bear in mind in the first instance that we have a facility and freedom for expressing thought that we did not have in former times. I don't care how many thousand doubters there