

Let us, therefore, begin to examine and consider the signs of our own time. What are its most striking and significant symptoms? "Watchman, what of the night?"

I see three gigantic and formidable powers ever pushing forward, actively encroaching on their neighbours, and still striving to swallow up and devour every weaker power. These aggressive powers are—1st, the Church of Rome; 2nd, The Empire of Russia; and 3rd, The United States of America.

Now, these are actual powers permitted by God. We must meet them face to face. "Wilt thou not, then, be afraid of the power?" They are our adversaries, with which we must either "agree by the way," or else "give diligence that we may be delivered from them, lest they hale us to the judge," the officer, and the unrelenting prison! This is the stern truth of the matter. Those powers are both watchful and active, so that if we be now careless and idly at ease, we will soon have to start up in a fearful hurry, too late! The signs at present seem to show that the United States intend to absorb the whole of the Western Continent or New World, little by little; that Russia is preparing to play a little game with the Eastern Continent or Old World; and that the Romish Church is striving to bring our British nobles under its power, and thus, getting possession of the wealth and the influence of Old England, to domineer proudly and severely over the world.

One word about each of those powers. The United States are formidable on account of their vast resources for the future, their rapid growth, and the high spirit of their people. Already have they vindicated their Union in a way that seems decisive for ages yet to come. Very soon, if not already, they will prove an overmatch for ordinary nations. They are of the same race and religion as ourselves. It is of the utmost importance that we "agree with this adversary by the way." How Rome would rejoice to see the mighty Protestant nations, Britain and America, butchering one another in war! Never may I see that day!

Some reckless souls in Ireland and elsewhere are striving to raise "a cloud in the west," which might burst in a bloody storm between Britain, Ireland, and America. But our duty is to avert that cloud by timely wisdom and goodness. The Irish are a warm-hearted people, and if we deal frankly and courteously with the well-disposed, seeking to do good to all, we will soon see the ill-disposed put to silence by the voice of Ireland itself. Then will Ireland become once more a strength and a delight to the Empire.

Secondly, Russia is also formidable in its vast resources and in its compact unity under the autocratic will of its Czar, but more happily and hopefully in its growing wisdom and virtue: for it is forming active Bible Societies, and liberating its serfs, while the Romish Church is trying to bind the people more narrowly and helplessly in the chain of an assumed Papal Infallibility. If Russia is not yet the mightiest empire in the world, it will probably be so in the course of time. Its people are brave and hardy. Its religion is not Romanism, but Greek Christianity, which numbers more adherents than all the Protestant Churches put together. By all good means, therefore, we should "agree with this adversary (Russia) by the way." Its Church is free from many of the errors of Rome, and should be a most valuable ally to Protestantism.

Thirdly, The Church of Rome is the most terrible adversary of the three, on account of its numbers, its claims of infallibility and exclusive power over the kingdom of heaven, its Jesuitical cunning, its treachery with "heretics," and its most shocking cruelty where it gets full power over its adversaries. Already it rules about 170,000,000 of people; the Greek Church rules about 90,000,000; and the Protestant Churches about 80,000,000. Let us then "count the cost, whether with ten thousand men we are able to meet our adversary that comes with twenty thousand."

Rome is formidable, too, by its compulsory union under one Pope, while