

from the superstitions of the past. These views permeate the popular literature of the day. Magazines and novels teem with sarcasms and invendoes at the expense of the distinguishing and fundamental truths of revealed religion. The third point in the resolution—the perversion of scientific truth—I will not touch, fearing that its attractiveness would lure me to lengths which would prove unjust to the gentlemen who are to follow. I will, therefore, turn Mr. Darwin and his confreres over to our eminent townsman, Dr. Wilson, advising the audience to possess themselves at once with a copy of “Caliban,” the doctor’s latest and ablest production, just from the press. The resolution alludes in the fourth place, to “the encroaching spirit of a centralizing priesthood.” The most significant event of the last three years was not the one which engrossed and absorbed the greatest measure of the world’s attention—the Franco-German war. It was the proclamation of the dogma of the Papal Infallibility. Of course the world knew that the Romish Church was infallible, but did not know where the infallibility lay, nor did the church itself. Its priests and bishops might dispute either the Papal brief, or the decree of a Council, without assailing the infallibility. But from the moment of the proclamation of the dogma, the little shadow of liberty that remained, the little sphere in which the opinions of the individual were respected, was at once obliterated, and ecclesiastical despotism, full and perfect, centred in a poor old Pope! We hail the dogma which invests a weak, and it may be wicked, man with the divine attribute of infallibility, as the herald of the dissolution of the Papal power. Hardly had the decree been pronounced, when the temporal power was wrenched from the hands of Pius IX. The Governments of all the Catholic nations have since the decree sternly resisted Papal assumption. In the bosom of the church itself were found free spirits, like Hyacinthe and Dollinger, ready to inaugurate a second Reformation. It is a strange spectacle, but with the advancing pretensions and waning power of Rome, we see throughout Christendom a tendency towards the assumption of priestly prerogatives. For all these evils the antidote is found in a “complete diffusion of the divine word among the people.” Has any age a tendency to worldliness? No other volume brings the world to come so near—thus breaking the charm of the present, as it demands an answer to its startling proposition, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Is infidelity in specious forms diffused through society? How the Bible inbreathes into the soul of its careful reader the consciousness of a *personal God*, thus counteracting the most bewitching species of modern scepticism. And while it is not the design of the Bible to teach scientific truth, its humble and earnest reader is too well fortified against the perversions of a boastful science to suppose that the soul, with all its attributes and exercises, conscience and will, the mind with all its products in literature and art, are only a modification of the molecules of ammonia, water, and carbonic acid! The encroachments of a centralizing priesthood will make but slight headway against a people who have learned that the regenerated family of Christ are a “kingdom of priests unto God,” and that every true believer in Christ is himself anointed a priest to offer up gifts and spiritual sacrifices. Among such a Bible and Spirit-taught people, the pretensions holders of a pretent for the communication of sacramental grace will find but few adherents! The speaker concluded by impressing upon the audience the uselessness of depending altogether upon the circulation of the Bible, unless, in the language of the resolution, “its truths are spiritually apprehended.” In the profound language of Cudworth, “paper and ink never yet made a Christian.” He therefore urged that every lover of the Bible should pray that the Spirit which gave the Word might, through it, “quicken the souls that are dead in trespasses and in sins.”

The Rev. J. B. Muir, M.A., seconded the resolution, observing :—

It affords me great pleasure to second this resolution. It is a most