

bloodshed and devastation wherever it has been established, continues to exert a mischievous influence and to impede the progress of pure Christianity. It is an enormous dead-weight on the chariot of the gospel. The final victory of the just cause cannot be achieved till it is removed out of the way.

Behold, then, the undertaking in which we are engaged. Our object is, to complete the Reformation so happily begun in the sixteenth century. The Reformers contented themselves with lopping off the great branches of the parasitic tree of superstition and tyranny. For our part, we shall not be satisfied till we have hewn down its trunk, and torn from the soil the last fibres of its roots. All our operations tend to this blessed issue. In this enterprise we are united with the servants of God of every evangelical denomination. It is cheering to know that the cause steadily advances. Truth is widely diffused. Sound views of Christian worship and church government are propagated with great zeal, and enforced by arguments that defy refutation. Corruptions and abuses are sparingly exposed. The efforts of the foe are carefully observed, that new attempts at encroachment may be met with firm resistance, and that all advantages gained may be fully secured. The spiritual army daily increases in numbers; and the watch-word of the host is, "The sword of the Spirit, and the power of God."

II. We proceed to point out THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED.

It is essentially necessary, in seeking to promote the cause of God, that there should be a devout adherence to the divine plans, and an obedient regard to divine laws. The work of mercy, under the gospel dispensation, is to be tried on by means of the truth, faithfully dispensed by preachers, and servants of the Redeemer, and applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. We have no encouragement to expect success in any other way. All our arrangements must tend to the "manifestation of the truth." This being premised, some practical hints may be offered, illustrative of the policy which proved so successful at the period of Jewish history to which the text refers.

There must be *general observation*. Before Nehemiah began to repair the breaches in the city wall, he surveyed it in every part. "I went out by night," he says, "and viewed the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and the